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HINDI DRAMA

FROM ITS RISE TO THE PRESENT DAY (1948)

(REVISED THESIS)

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1950

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Extracts from Introduction to the Old Thesis

In our country the tradition of Drama is really very old, at least as old as that in any other country of the world. Sanskrit drama is not only one of the oldest dramas of the world; it is very rich and exuberant at the same time. While Kalidasa has earned a world-wide reputation for his immortal 'Shakuntala', other playwrights like Bhavabhuti, Bhasa, Vishakhadatta etc. have also earned a lasting fame for their memorable contributions.

But while the regular chain of Sanskrit drama broke off as early as the eleventh or the twelfth century A.D., the foundations of regular Hindi drama were laid as late as the middle of ninteenth century. By that time Hindi had completed about eight hundred years of its existence, and had made a remarkable progress in the field of poetry. Bharatendu Harishchandra, with some of his celebrated contemp-oraries like Radha Krishna Das, Shri Niwas Das etc. dominated the ninteenth century Hindi drama. But as in the days of Bharatendu Hindi drama rose with a sudden speed, in the same way it speedily declined after the death of that reputed writer. On the other hand, the twentieth century and especially the modern period is very rich in drama.

While today Hindi drama is flourishing in all branches with vigour and variety, one finds a deplorable lack of critical literature in that field. As compared with other branches of Hindi literature (especially poetry), very little has been written on Hindi drama so far. Hardly any author[1] has undertaken a carefully critical survey of the entire Hindi drama — from its rise to the present day (1948). While one or two scholars have done appreciable work in ninteenth century drama, the twentieth century and more especially the modern

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(1) Dr. Som Nath Gupta of Jaswant College, Jodhpur, is perhaps the only scholar who has undertaken a careful critical survey of the entire Hindi drama (from its rise to 1942). His valuable work 'Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas' appeared in the market when this old thesis had been finished and was being typed. The learned Doctor has worked hard in presenting a critical study of Hindi drama from its rise to the days of Prasad (1932); but he has made only a passing reference to Hindi drama of Post-Prasad period. The writer of this thesis, on the other hand, has attempted a detailed account of the Post-Prasad period (1933-1948) also, in addition to dealing with Hindi drama of the preceding periods.

period(1925-48) has been grossly neglected.

And this was the reason for which I selected this subject for my thesis. Finding the comparative lack of scientific criticism on Hindi drama, I, being interested both in the reading and writing of drama more than in any other branch of Hindi literature, sought to fill up this gap by attempting a complete critical survey of Hindi drama in the form of a thesis.

.......In order to make my work up-to-date and an improvement on all previous attempts, I have made use of all available material. But while I have read various critical scholars carefully, I have read the original plays even more carefully and thoroughly x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x Besides, I have thrown light on several points which had been altogether left aside by other authorities or had just been touched by them.

At the same time I may confess that my thesis aims to be more suggestive than exhaustive. The subject of my thesis being very lengthy, it has not been possible for me to deal with every playwright at great length. A detailed account of every playwright can find a place in an exhaustive history of Hindi drama, and not a critical work of this nature. While I, on my part, have tried to discuss all important playwrights and problems of Hindi drama, at the same time I have chosen to be brief and to the point. ------------....

Besides referring to the leading tendencies in Hindi drama in different periods, I have also dealt with leading playwrights and their works. While representative and important plays have been included for critical appreciation, too ordinary ones have been deliberately dropped. Even there, I have not been able to say every word or the last word on every play or playwright. My subject was so unwieldy that it was impossible for me to do so. A single playwright like Bharatendu, Jay Shankar Prasad, Seth Govind Das or Uday Shankar Bhatta etc., or a single topic like 'Hindi One- Act-Play' or 'Historical Drama' (or 'Problem Play') etc. would have sufficed for that purpose. An independent thesis on each one of these subjects could have done full justice to them.

Now to add a few words on the thesis itself. In the very opening chapter I have briefly referred to all those reasons — political social and religious — that were responsible for the late rise of Hindi drama. Next I have discussed various medieval forms of entertainment like the Ras-lila, Ram-lila and the Nautanki etc.; I have tried to show that our standard Hindi drama did not develop directly from these forms; these forms, in spite of their partly dramatic qualities, maintained their independent status from the medieval times to the present day.

Besides dealing with various Hindi dramas before Bharatendu, I have described the main factors that were responsible for the rise of regular Hindi drama. Although Hindi drama rose at a very belated time, yet it made very rapid progress after its rise. Bharatendu himself wrote a rich variety of plays; and the dramatic tradition set up by him was promptly carried on by his contemporaries.-------But as in the days of Bharatendu, Hindi drama rose with marked rapidity, in a similar way it speedily declined after ~~that~~ The death of that reputed writer. Various reasons of this rapid decline of Hindi drama have been enumerated in Chapter VIII.

The period between 1885 and 1912 can be rightly called a sterile period in the history of Hindi drama. x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x. After stepping over the sterile period we descend upon a very flourishing period of Hindi drama (1912-30). This period is dominated by the colossal personality of Jay Shankar Prasad, and playwrights like Milind, Bhatta, Ugra and Sudarshan etc. also made their respective contributions. More flourishing than the above period is our modern period, with its rich variety of drama. Several types of drama, like the Historical dramas, Mythological dramas, Problem plays, Lyrical dramas, Allegorical dramas and One- Act-Plays were written by numerous writers, and these have been discussed at some length in a number of chapters.

In addition to the literary drama, a separate chapter has been devoted to the history and critcism of Parsi theatrical dramas.

Another chapter deals with the history of Hindi stage, from the earliest times to the present day. The technique of Hindi drama has been discussed in two different chapters; as the technique of ninteen -th century drama is greatly different from the modern dramatic tech- nique, I have discussed each one of them in a separate chapter.

Prognostication in literary matters is, of course, a difficult and a hazardous task. Still, in the concluding chapter I have expressed some hopes about the future of Hindi drama. In addition to that I have made a practical suggestion, which, if materialised, can definitely improve the lot of Hindi drama, and can educate the taste of the masses. x x x x x x x x x

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Ved Paul Khanna

24-4-1949.

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A Note on the Revised Thesis

Being always interested in the study of drama and dramatic literature, in February 1945 I thought of writing a thesis on Hindi drama for the Doctor's Degree. I disclosed my mind to my worthy teacher, late Dr. Lakshman Sarup M.A., D.Phil.(Oxon.) of the Panjab University, and he personally approved of my idea and subject. Having worked on the subject for a few months, in October 1945 I applied to the Panjab University for the official approval of my subject. In May 1946 I got the official approval of the University, and Prof. Gauri Shankar M.A., B.Litt.(Oxon.) of Government College, Lahore was appointed my Supervisor. Major part of the thesis was finished before 15th August 1947, after which, due to serious communal disturbances, concentrated attention could not be paid to the thesis for a few months. From January 1948 I again turned to my thesis, body and soul, and the work was finally completed in

April 1949. I knew the amount of time and labour I had spent on the thesis, but it was more encouraging to find that my learned Supervisor was very much pleased with my work.

But when the University informed me that my thesis has been rejected by the learned examiners, the shock was really killing for me. It was a bolt from the blue both for myself and my worthy Supervisor. I was feeling very much disheartened and undone; but when I carefully read the criticism of my learned examiners, I thanked them for their suggestions, and felt that in spite of rejecting my thesis, they have appreciated my work to a great extent. Somehow or other I plucked courage and set myself to work again. Today, after eight months of 'Samadhi' over my thesis I have raised my head again. While revising the thesis, I have closely kept the criticism of these examiners in view, and have strictly followed their remarks in removing the defects pointed out by them in the old thesis. I have completely overhauled the thesis in the light of that criticism, and that fact can be better noticed by reading this thesis in comparison with the old one.

The chief objection raised by both the learned examiners was that " in the thesis statements are made without either external or internal corroborative evidence." This time I have been careful to attach evidence (internal or external) to all important statements assertions. The other two defects pointed out by one of the learned examiners were that "the language (of the thesis) is too immoderate and journalistic for an academic subject", and that "there is too much repetition throughout the whole thesis." Well, I have looked to these points also very carefully and have tried to do away with these defects.

I need not emphasize that I have worked very hard for the thesis, since this fact has already been acknowledged by my learned examiners in their remarks. I have worked hard again in revising the ~~the~~ thesis, and having done my Duty to the best of my ability, I leave the fruit in the hands of my learned examiners, the Makers of my Destiny.

Ved Paul Khanna
(Ved Paul Khanna)

14-11-1950.

CHAPTER I.

BEGINNINGS OF HINDI DRAMA.

Causes of the Lack of Hindi Drama before the Middle of the Ninteenth Century.

Already before Bharatendu Harishchandra, Hindi had completed about eight hundred years of its existence. It had also made a remarkable progress in the field of poetry. But when we turn our attention towards drama, the very first thing that strikes us in the lack of early Hindi drama. Before Bharatendu, the first great Hindi playwright, we come across hardly a dozen plays[1]; of these too, with the exception of one or two, all others are only plays in name, because they are mostly wanting in the essential characteristics of drama.[2] Sanskrit literature is, no doubt, very rich in drama; still Hindi, no matter descended from Sankrit through Prakrit and Apabhramsha stages, is so poor in the same branch of literature before the middle of the ninteenth century.

There were several reasons- political, social and religious, which were responsible for this lack of Hindi Drama before the middle of the ninteenth century. The first important phenomenon that stood in the way of the rise of Hindi Drama was the political chaos and unrest that swayed the country for centuries after the death of Harsha.[3] Ever since the birth of this new Vernacular, the country was passing through an era of unprecedented strife, internal and external. The country was divided into small principalities, usually warring with each other. Due to mutual hostilities and

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1. See Chapter III of this thesis. 2. Ibid.
3. See Braj Ratna Das: (Hindi Natya Sahitya, Second edition, page 41) Prof. Satyendra (Hindi Ekanki, page 9), Dr. Lakshmi Sagar Varshney (Adhunik Hindi Sahitya, page 223).

constant danger of foreign invasions, the very existence of these states was threatened at all hours. They had often to get ready for engagement in battle with their neighbours, kinsfolk or foreign invaders.

This being the state of affairs, there could have possibly, been little scope for drama, which needs ample time, peace and expenditure for perfection.

Two factors, we find, are generally responsible for the progress and popularity of drama; it is either the State encouragement or the backing of the public that leads to the prosperity of drama. It was State patronage that led to the popularity of the Elizabethan (as also of the Sanskrit) drama, while the public support and encouragement is responsible for the progress and prosperity of modern English drama. In case of Hindi drama, State patronage could not be offered to it for several centuries due to reasons stated above. At the same time the absence of an undisturbed peace and continued prosperity discouraged the public also from thinking of such a pastime. This reason gets more convincing when we find that it was only after a long period of peace and strong central government under the British rule that regular Hindi drama could rise in the second half of the ninteenth century.[1]

Moreover, in no language could ever drama rise as soon as the language itself came into existence. For centuries together, the language has to go through a gradual process of stabilization, systematisation and finish, before it can serve as a proper medium for drama. It is curious to note that while poetry begins to flourish much earlier in a language, drama takes too long to occupy its legitimate place in that very language. The beginnings of all literatures are to be found in poetry; a passion for rhythmic expression is inborn in human nature; man feels first and reasons afterwards; so, in the course of evolution, poetry which interprets emotion, precedes prose which is wedded to reason.[2]

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1. See page 25 below.

2. Ram Babu Saxena : A History of Urdu Literature, page 10.

Vedic Sanskrit, for example, is very old and has abundant poetry in it. The whole of Rig Veda is in verse, but we find no dramatic literature in that language. In Clássical Sanskrit, again, poetical literature (the 'Adi Kavya' of Valmiki etc.) is much older than drama. In the same way in Hindi literature, while we witness the development of poetry as early as the days of Sur Das and Tulsi Das, specimens of good drama are lacking before the middle of the ninteenth century.

Further, poetry alone cannot impart that particular histrionic touch and force to drama, for which a developed, forceful, and fully embellished prose is essential. And we know that it was as late as the middle of the ninteenth century that the foundations of standard Hindi prose were laid by Lallu Lal and a few of his contemporaries. It was only after this time that drama could have been successfully attempted or expected in Hindi. Therefore, this lack of standard Hindi prose before Bharatendu is also, in a certain measure, responsible for the lack of standard Hindi drama before that reputed writer.

Scholars like Braj Ratna Das,[1] Babu Gulab Rai[2] and Prof. Satyendra[3] are also of the above opinion; Dr. Shri Krishna Lal[4] also believes it as one of the secondary causes for the lack of early Hindi drama. But Dr. Som Nath Gupta, inspite of accepting it as a secondary cause,[5] has strongly challenged its tenability. In his 'Hindi Nataka Sahitya Ka Itihasa '[6] he writes:

"परोक्ष दृष्टि से देखा जाय तो सिद्धान्त रूप से भी यह बात मान्य नहीं है। संस्कृत का अतुल नाटक-साहित्य अधिकांश में कवितामय है। उसके शकुन्तला और उत्तररामचरित में कितना गद्य का अंश है जिसके कारण ये नाटक इतने ऊंचे समझे जाते हैं? क्या अंग्रेजी के प्रसिद्ध कवि शेक्सपियर के नाटकों का मान इनमें पाये जाने वाले नगण्य गद्य पर स्थिर है?"

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1. Hindi Natya Sahitya, 2nd Edition, page 43.
2. Hindi Natya Vimarsh: 1942 ; page 95.
3. Hindi Ekanki, Ist Edition, page 9.
4. Adhunik Hindi Sahitya Ka Vikas, 1942, page 193.
5. Hindi Nataka Sahitya Ka Itihasa, 2nd edition page 24 and page 27.
6. Page 24 (2nd edition).

We admit that Verse is abundant in Sanskrit drama, but we have also to remember that not a single Sanskrit play worth the name has been written exclusively in Verse. Again, if there is abundance of emotional and interesting verses in the 'Shakuntala' and the 'Uttara-rama-Charita', the prose portion is also not negligible or less powerful. If these two plays are immortal, it is not so entirely due to their poetic beauties; lyrical verses no doubt enhance the beauty of these plays, but if we banish all prose from these plays, they will collapse like houses made of cards. Even with the present amount of verse, plays like 'Uttara-rama Charita' are dubbed and better appreciated by critics as 'poems'[1] and not as plays. So, it has to be admitted, as we have said in the beginning, that poetry alone cannot serve as a medium of standard drama, however it may add to the lyrical beauties of the works as in case of Sanskrit drama.

Again, taking Shakespeare's plays into consideration we have to remember that they are written in blank verse which is possessed of the properties of prose as well. Not only the plays of Shakespeare, even our modern lyrical Hindi dramas[2] are written entirely in verse. But here again it is the free verse that has been pressed into service, and which, like Shakespeare's blank verse, possesses the qualities and force of prose as well; in fact this poetry is pseudo-prose and pseudo- verse, as can be seen from the following lines-

ठीक है समाज का प्रवाद अति दारुण है
किन्तु है समाज का विधान तो मनुजकृत;
छिन्न कर देता वही जो इसे बनाता कभी
मानव की प्रेरणा का फल ही नियम है। (3)

Or again,

जब किसी अपेक्षित बात के निर्णय का
समय समीप आता, होती दारुण दशा
जाते मास, जाते वर्ष, परन्तु घटिकाएं
जो रहतीं शेष, वे अशेष जान पड़तीं। (4)

Further, we find that drama is not merely a part of literature; it is always dependent on the theatre[5] for its development as for

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1. Keith: Sanskrit Drama, 1923; page 195. 2. See Chapter XXII of this thesis.
3. Udaya Shankar Bhatta 'Matsya-gandha'; 2nd edition page 32.
4. Seth Govind Das 'Sneh Ya Swarg'; Ist edition page 10.
5. R.K. Yajnik: Indian Theatre; 1933, page 36.

its rise. Reading a play, satisfactory though it may be to some, especially those with a vivid imagination cannot, however, take the place of seeing it in the theatre.[1] The reader may have studied a play dozens of times, but until he has seen a capable company of actors actually perform it before an audience, the play has never really come to life for him.[2] The stage is, therefore, very essential for the rise and growth of drama.[3] Accordingly, Bengali drama is much older than Hindi drama greatly because the theatre existed much earlier in Bengal than in the Hindi-speaking area.[4] In Hindi we had no stage before the time of Bharatendu, who realised its immense need for the growth of drama, and established it for that purpose for the first time. But for the absence of regular Hindi stage before Bharatendu, the long period preceding him would not have perhaps been so sterile in drama.

While Pt. Ram Chandra Shukla,[5] Braj Ratna Das,[6] Dr. Varshneya,[7] and Shikhar Chandra Jain[8] agree that the lack of regular Hindi stage is responsible for the late rise of Hindi drama, Dr. Som Nath again holds a slightly different view. He agrees that stage has secondary importance in the rise and development of drama;[9] at the same time he says:- "परन्तु उनके (= अभिनयशालाओं के) न होने से किसी भी साहित्य में नाट्य-कला का विकास रुका हो ऐसी बात नहीं है। उदाहरण के लिये संस्कृत साहित्य को लीजिये। संस्कृत का नाटक साहित्य इतना सुसम्पन्न होने पर भी प्रेक्षागृहों के संबन्ध में कोरा जैसा ही है। संस्कृत में प्रेक्षागृहों की मात्रा कितनी थी जिसके आधार पर उस साहित्य का विकास हुआ? स्वयं हिंदी को ले लीजिये। आज इसका जितना नाटक-साहित्य है उस दृष्टि से उसमें कितनी अभिनयशालाएं हैं? क्या वर्तमान साहित्य के विकास का श्रेय अभिनयशालाओं को किसी भी प्रकार दिया जा सकता है? etc. etc."(10)

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1. Milton Marx; Enjoyment of Drama; 1940, page 5.
2. Ibid.
3. J.W. Marriot: The Theatre; 1946 page 190.
4. Braj Ratna Das: Hindi Natya Sahitya, page 44.
5. Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihasa, Punjab edition, page 385.
6. Hindi Natya Sahitya, page 43.
7. Adhunik Hindi Sahitya, page 223.
8. Hindi Natya Chintan, page 25.
9. Hindi Natyak Sahitya Ka Itihasa, 2nd edition, page 20.
10. Hindi Nataka Sahitya Ka Itihasa, page 20.

These words coming as they do from the pen of a learned scholar, are certainly surprising. So far as Sanskrit Drama is concerned it is very erroneous to believe that there were practically no theatres to stage these plays. Sanskrit drama, despite its complexity, is essentially intended for performance, and Sanskrit plays (especially those of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti) were written for anything but mere reading.[1] The frequent use of stage-directions like नाटयति (he acts), नाटयन्ति (they act), ततः प्रविशतः कुसुमावचयं नाटयन्त्यौ सख्यौ ; पुष्पोच्चयं रूपयति etc. etc. (acts the gatering of flowers 'Shakuntala' Act IV) etc. that frequently occur in the 'Shakuntala', the 'Uttara-rama-Charita' and almost in every Sanskrit play, is sufficient to prove that these scenes (and therefore these plays) were actually enacted before an audience.[2] Again the vivid account of the theatre (प्रेक्षागृह), detailed description of the paraphernalia of the stage and the auditorium, detailed direction for various movements representing the acts of mounting a chariot, fighting with a foe, or of groping in the dark or of crossing a river etc., and details on the dresses and make-up of different characters as contained in Bharat's Natya-Shastra and later Sanskrit treatises on drama, lead one to the conclusion that Sanskrit plays were written for production, and that these details and directions were meant for the guidance of the director and the actors.[3]

Further, it is clear from the 'Prastavanas' of various Sanskrit plays (e.g. 'Shakuntala', 'Uttara-rama- Charita', 'Ratnavali', 'Mudra- rakshasa' etc.) that they were generally staged on the occasion of some festivals; these festivals were either religious (See 'Uttara-rama-Charita') or were connected with the advent of one season or the other (see 'Ratnavali' 'Shakuntala', 'Mudra-rakshasa'). Sanskrit dramas were, therefore, normally staged on some occasion of special rejoicings and solemnity, such as a festival of a god, or a royal marriage, or the celebration of a victory etc. and the place of performance naturally came to be the temple of the god or palace of the King.[4]

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1. Keith: Sanskrit Drama, page 358.
2. Also see R.K. Yajnik: Indian Theatre, page 44 f.
3. Ibid page 46-48; also Keith, Sanskrit Drama page 364-65.
4. Keith: Sanskrit Drama, page 358.

As those times were much different from our modern times, it is true that there were no theatres of the modern type which are often run on commercial lines and where tickets are sold. But the courts of the kings and temples of gods would have perhaps been better theatres, as the kings could have lavished more money on these performances than our professional or amateur clubs today. In view of the above facts it cannot be accepted that there were no theatres in the age of Sanskrit drama.

Regarding the question of the number of Sanskrit theatres, we can say that firstly it matters little; quality is of greater importance than quantity; if one may judge from the production of Sanskrit dramas in the presence of a highly cultured and critical audience and from the fact that they possessed a set of minute rules for histrionics, one may easily conclude that the level of acting must have been very high.[1] Again, when plays were performed in temples at great festivals, there must have been admission for as many as could be crowded in, although in private exhibitions the audience may well have been more select.[2] Further, while there might have been a limited number of theatres in royal palaces or courts, there could have been no limit to such theatres (and performances) in temples, as the number of temples was not limited.

Further, Dr. Som Nath Gupta takes up the case of modern Hindi drama and the number of Hindi theatres today. In this connection it may be pointed out that today in the East Punjab, Delhi, United Provinces (and perhaps in other parts of the Hindi-speaking area too) almost every high school and College is a theatre in itself, for full plays and one act plays are occasionally staged by the amateur clubs of these colleges and schools.[3] Besides these amateur clubs, there are one or more professional dramatic clubs in big cities like Delhi, Simla etc. In certain cases these clubs have permanently built theatres (e.g. The 'Gaiety Theatre,' and the 'Kali Bari Hall' of Simla), while in other cases these professional clubs (e.g. 'Ashok Natak Samaj', Delhi) raise theatres when and where they like. Thus we find

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1. Yajnik: Indian Theatre, page 50.
2. Keith: Sanskrit Drama, page 370.
3. See Chapter XXVII of this thesis.

that there is not the dearth of theatres for Hindi drama today. And the healthy effect of these clubs is also noticeable on Hindi dramatic literature of today; it is only during the last ten-fifteen years that these clubs rose in number and prominence and consequently our playwrights have started taking care in making their plays suited to the exegencies of the stage. Due to this very reason we find that our plays of the last ten fifteen years and especially our plays of today suffer less from stage defects than plays of previous years.

Further, for the rise and development of great drama, not only is it essential that the plays should be brought to life by being performed on the stage, but also that the actors must hold a respected place in society. Drama will naturally prosper as the actors gain more esteem and regard in society; it is bound to suffer as the actors are held in bad repute, and are hated for their alleged immorality.[1]

In the early days of Hindi drama, as in the later days of Sanskrit drama, actors had earned a distinctly bad reputation and their private lives were supposed to be far from moral; Dr. A.B. Keith[2] has described in detail how the reputation of actors and actresses was very low in the days of later Sanskrit drama, and how they had earned a bad name for their profession. While, on the one hand, they enjoyed the friendship and love of great kings and eminent dramatists for the reason of their art and entertainment, on the other hand they were despised as 'low and degraded' and were denied some of the privileges of the highest caste.[3] Not only in India, even in England in medieval times the actors had earned a bad reputation.[4]

In late medieval times, generally lowclass people like the 'Merasis' and others, with undignified and morbid habits entertained the people with 'Swangs' 'Naqals' or what we may call rude types of early drama; they were not decent citizens with a dignified air around them. Naturally, therefore, there were people (and they are there even at this time, not only in India but in England[5] too)

1. Shikhar Chandra Jain 'Hindi Natya Chintan', page 29.
2. Sanskrit Drama, page 363.
3. Yajnik: Indian Theatre page 50.
4. J.W. Marriot: The Theatre, page 70 ff.
5. Ibid page 72.

who were instinctively suspicious of such entertainments. Even today, in country districts and even in backward elements of the towns one frequently meets men and women who believe that dancing, theatre-going and many other popular pastimes are dangerous[1] and even disgraceful. The theatre has been suffering from bad reputation (in India as well as in the progressive country of England), and consequently it was disliked by more than those who patronized and encouraged it.

It is this neglect, hate and disregard of the actor, especially in late medieval times, that also checked the growth of Hindi drama in its full-fledged form.

There was yet another tendency which stood in the way of Hindi drama, and which did not permit it to gain its legitimate ground for a long time. In medieval times, especially in the Bhakti age, it had been customary with the genius to parade their learning and art through the medium of poetry.[2] Perhaps under the influence of the spirit of those times or in obedience to the universal practice that poetry usually precedes drama, great geniuses like Tulsi Das, Sur Das and others chose to cultivate their talents in the field of poetry, instead of adopting any other form like prose-story, novel or drama- as a suitable medium for their thought. Literary persons vied with each other in exploring the old established channel of poetry than inventing or adopting some new form of literature, where their chances of success were uncertain though not meagre.

Also we know that in order to understand and appreciate drama in proper, the public has got to be more sensitive, alive to entertainment and advanced in literary laste than to appreciate narrative poems; it is easier for a raw or semi-cultured audience to understand and enjoy poetical recitations (and still more if they be from religious books) than a more literary, ornate and advanced form of literature like drama. For some centuries before Bharatendu, under the influence of the spirit of the Bhakti and the Riti ages, the general public rejoiced more in recitations, sermons from Sadhus or poetic demonstrations of the genius as also in Riti Kavya, and

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1. The words of J.W. Marriot ('The Theatre' page 72) about modern England are equally true of our country also.

2. Satyendra; Hindi Ekanki, page 9.

was not sufficiently aroused to dramatic performances. Due to this atmosphere of those times, the idea of a prose drama could not easily strike on ordinary mind.

The Islamic rule, which lasted in India for so many centuries, proved another set-back to the growth of Hindi drama. It was greatly responsible for keeping the lid tight on the dramatic tendencies that could have arisen in peoples' mind from time to time. Firstly, as a result of Mohammadan invasions and their subsequent victories, the temples and the princely courts, which were the two chief homes of such performances during the period of Hindu regime, began to fall a prey to the religious passion and vindictive pride of the conquerors. Not only did the early Muslim invaders, conquerors and rulers (like Mahmud Ghazni, Mohd. Ghauri, Alauddin Khilji etc.) satiated their religious zeal by trying to wipe out these two seats (viz. Hindu temples and courts) of such performances, thereby giving a death blow to the traditions of classical drama, even in the later period bigoted emperors like Aurangzeb and some of his successors also did the same.

Secondly, Islam strictly bans all types of entertainments which are of the nature of drama; and though this religious ban did not directly hinder the growth of Hindi drama, yet indirectly it proved no less detrimental, as this is the natural weakness of the common man to act according to the taste and whims of his rulers. Thirdly, although we agree with Dr. Som Nath Gupta[1] that Mughal emperors like Akbar and Jehangir were very tolerant and were great lovers of art and literature, yet even these emperors, inspite of the fact that they patronized poetry, music and other fine arts, did not encourage the growth of drama.[2] The existence of nine gems at the court of Akbar is no doubt a historical fact,[3] yet we do not hear a single word about Akbar's leanings towards or interest in drama; otherwise, had he been equally interested in drama, he could have ordered some of his talented courtiers to produce plays at least on the lines of Sanskrit drama, even if there was an entire lack of dramatic interest in common people. We have every right

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1. Hindi Nataka Sahitya Ka Itihasa, page 21 f.
2. Dr. L.S. Varshneya, Adhunik Hindi Sahitya, page 223.
3. Hindi Nataka Sahitya Ka Itihasa, page 21.

to conclude from this absolute silence of Moghal emperors regarding drama, that, great lovers of art and literature that they were, if ever any zeal for drama arose in their mind, their lips were tightly closed by their religious ban. Otherwise, emperors like Akbar would have certainly induced their courtiers to lay the foundations of drama in Hindi or in Urdu.

And when these Moghul emperors, with great passion for art and literature, chose to be silent about drama, then how could stern puritans like Aurangzeb who did not like the presence even of music in his empire,[1] at all tolerate the growth of such an un-Islamic thing as drama. Muslim fanaticism reached its worst in the reign of Aurangzeb, who tried his best to remove the very trace of Hinduism from India by converting large numbers of Hindus to Islam by force. If in his reign one or two plays were written or translated from Sanskrit as Dr. Som Nath Gupta has pointed out,[2] that does not in any way prove that, with his savage anti-Hindu policy, Aurgngzeb was tolerant or in any way helpful in the matter of drama. It only means that solitary playwrights satisfied the zeal of their own mind by such stray attempts, and their works being very solitary and unknown, probably did not come to the notice of Aurangzeb. Writing dramas at large (and then staging them before the public) could never have escaped the notice of that king, afraid of whose savage bigoted nature, scholars and geniuses in general could not dare to think of writing dramas.

Nor could the Indians get any inspiration in this field from the Persian literature of their Muslim rulers, as they received from the drama of the West under the British rule. Persian literature is absolutely blank in drama;[3] so it could not give any impetus to the dramatic tendencies of the Indian people which they certainly got from the dramatic literature of the West under British rule.[4]

But when one notices that 'Indar Sabha', the first Hindi drama was written by Agha Hasan Amanat, a Muslim, at the court of a Muslim chief, one is likely to be puzzled; the idea of a drama coming

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1. Satyendra: Hindi Ekanki, page 9.
2. Hindi Nataka Sahitya Ka Itihasa, page 22.
3. R.B. Saksena. A History of Urdu Literature, page 22.
4. See page 26 below.

from the pen of a Muslim and produced at the court of a Muslim is certainly surprising. On the evidence of this very fact, Dr. Som Nath Gupta has tried to prove that Muslim rule did not prove a set-back to the rise and growth of Hindi drama;[1] here we shall show how erroneous this argument is. Apparently the fact of a drama being written by a Muslim at the court of a Muslim is puzzling, yet as we go a little deep we find the puzzle solve itself. We must bear in mind that it was only the more or less orthodox and religious-minded element among the Mohammadans that was hostile to the idea of drama. On the other hand, by the time of 'Indar Sabha' Mohammadans had lost much of their religious bigotry and orthodoz nature due to their long stay in India and close connections with the Hindus. The Muslim princes and nobles like Siraj-ud-daulah, Mir Jafar, Mir Qasim etc. had shaken off their Islamic bigotry and participated even in the celebration of Hindu festivals of Spring, Holi, Dewali etc.[2] The Nawabs of Avadh (especially Wajid Ali Shah)[3] even surpassed their other Muslim friends in leading highly gay, romantic and in many ways un-Islamic lives. Therefore 'Indar Sabha', although written by Amanat at the court of Wajid Ali Shah has nothing to do with the passion and prejudice of the orthodox Muslim rulers who were hostile to such entertainments.

It is again erroneous to believe (as Dr. Som Nath[4] has done on the authority of Ram Babu Saksena) that 'Indar Sabha' was written by Amanat at the instance of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, and that the Nawab himself played the role of 'Indar' in it. The Nawab, inspite of his gay life and artistic pursuits, and in spite of of his being free from religious bias, had not perhaps the courage to go to that extent, and it has been proved by Prof. Masud Hasan Razvi[5] of the Lucknow University, that 'Indar Sabha' was written not at the inst-ance of the Nawab, nor was it staged in Qaiser Bagh, nor did the Nawab play the role of Indar in it.

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1. Hindi Nataka Sahitya Ka Itihasa, page 23.
2. Adhunik Hindi Sahitya, page 224.
3. R.B. Saksena: A History of Urdu Literature, page 117 ff & page 348-351.
4. Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihasa, page 9.
5. See translator's footnote on page 147 of 'Tarikh-i-Adab-i-Urdu.'

from the pen of a Muslim and produced at the court of a Muslim is certainly surprising. On the evidence of this very fact, Dr. [illegible] Gupta has tried to prove that Muslim rule did not prove a set-back to the rise and growth of Hindi drama.[1] Here we shall show how erroneous this argument is. Apparently the fact of a drama being written by a Muslim at the court of a Muslim is puzzling, yet as we [illegible] a little deep we find the puzzle solve itself. We must bear in [illegible] was only the more or less orthodox and religious-minded [illegible] the Mohammedans that was hostile to the idea of [illegible] other hand, by the time of 'Indar Sabha' Mohammedans [illegible] much of their religious bigotry and orthodox nature due to [illegible]ong stay in India and close connections with the Hindus. The [illegible] princes and nobles like Wajid-ud-daulah, Mir Jafar, Mir Qasim [illegible] off their Islamic bigotry and participated even in [illegible] of Hindu festivals of Spring, Holi, Dewali etc.[2] [illegible] even surpassed their [illegible] Nawab (especially Wajid Ali Shah)[3] [illegible]

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[illegible]

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1. R.B ... page 351.
... a Ka Itihasa, Punjab edition

As a matter of fact, after the battle of Buxar (1764) the Avadh Durbar gradually came under the influence of Western modes of life. Avadh came in close contact with the West; English influence began to grow in that state and European embassies, missionaries and travellers began to pour into the capital of that state. The Nawabs of Avadh quickly developed a taste for European diet, dress and entertainment. It was under the European influence, and at the suggestion of a French man[1] that Nawab Wajid Ali Shah ordered this play to be written; in this way it was not as a result of the Muslim encouragement that 'Indar Sabha' was produced.

More important than the above factors was another phenomenon that retarded the growth of Hindi drama. During the early Moghul period, especially in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, an intellectual movement swept the whole of Northern India. This movement, which is popularly known as the Bhakti movement led to the rise of several new sects like those of Kabir, Nanak, Dadoo and others, and a huge bulk of religious literature of a sectarian nature was produced under the influence of this movement. This movement was very wide, and as it started with the common man, it had a deep effect on the literature and thought of those days. The permanent note of this cult which is so frequently repeated in the teachings of Nanak, Kabir, Maluk Das and other saints of this movement, is that there was nothing but misery in this world; and the only remedy of this worldly woe and misery, as preached by these saints, was not any struggle against that misery, but the renunciation of the world. Their cry of fatalism meant, in other words, bidding farewell to the struggle and activities of the world. This made the people pessimistic, cynical and idle. Maluk Das, one of these saints preaches inaction in a very simple yet effective manner—

अजगर करे न चाकरी, पंछी करें न काम।
दास मलूका कह गये, सब के दाता राम॥ (2)

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1. R.B. Saksena: A History of Urdu Literature, page 351.
2. Pt. Ram Chandra Shukla- Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihasa, Punjab edition page 88.

The following words of Guru Nanak again inspire the feelings of vairagya and detachment from the world-

इस दम दा मैनूं की वे भरोसा, आया आया न आया न आया।
यह संसार रैन का सुपना, कहीं देखा, कहीं नाहिं दिखाया॥ (1)

Idle fatalism again resounds in the following words of Rahim-

रहिमन चुप है बैठिये, देखि दिनन को फेर।
जब नीके दिन आइहैं, बनत न लगे देर॥ (2).

Drama, on the other hand, is essentially a picture of swiftly moving, struggling and progressive society. This atmosphere of wide inaction and idle-ness, of the feelings of renunciation and detachment from the world was, to a great extent, unfavourable for the rise and growth of a swift and active thing like drama.

In this way we find that all these factors worked together to delay the rise of genuine Hindi drama till the middle of the ninteenth century. Taken singly and separately, none of the above causes can be held entirely responsible for this lack of drama; on the other hand these causes and factors worked together to delay its rise for a number of centuries.

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1. Ram Chandra Shukla: Hindi Sahitya ka Itihas, Panjab edition, page 83.
2. 'Kavya Sarita' edited by Prof. Saran Das Bhanot, page 68.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY TYPES OF HINDI DRAMA

In almost all the countries of the world, the origin of drama is religious.[1] It is the spirit of hero-worship or some religious zeal that gradually takes the form of drama,[2] although such drama is too simple and even crude in its original form. In the case of medieval Hindu masses too, drama originally rose in the form of certain types of performances, which were investigated by the spirit of hero-worship, or some religious zeal and devotion, as we shall show in the following. With the passage of time, the masses began to look for some easy means of entertainment in those very religious performances, besides the mere satisfaction of their devotional zeal.[3] So, as these performances gradually advanced and improved, elements of drama began to make their appearance in them. No doubt their chief aim continued to be religious, but, alongside of it, a persistent effort was naturally made to make these performances more and more entertaining and attractive, both to the eye as well as to the ear.

RAM -LILA

In different parts of the Hindi-speaking area, people had different tastes and devotion for different deities or heroes; as their taste and devotion varied, distinct forms of drama developed in different places. Consequently, we find three different types of early drama rising in different districts of the Hindi-speaking area. In Avadh, Benares and Mithila, Ram-lila became prominent, although in Rajputana, Central Provinces, Western U.P. East Punjab and Mysore also this form was euqlly present. In the eastern districts of U.P., which were the home of Ram-lila, the whole life

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1. J.W. Marriot: The Theatre page 70. (2) Keith: Sanskrit Drama page (36-49.
3. Dr. Shri Krishna Lal: Adhunik Hindi Sahitya Ka Vikas, pages 198-199.

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In almost all the countries of the world, the origin of drama is religious.[1] It is the spirit of hero-worship or some religious zeal that gradually takes the form of drama,[2] although such drama is too simple and even crude in its original form. In the case of mediaeval Hindi drama too, drama originally came in the form of certain types of performances, which were instigated by the spirit of hero-worship, or some religious zeal and devotion, as we shall show in the following. With the passage of time, the masses began to look for some easy means of entertainment in those very religious performances, besides the mere satisfaction of their devotional zeal. So, as these performances gradually advanced and improved, elements of drama began to make their appearance in them. No doubt their chief aim continued to be religious, but, alongside of it, a persistent effort was naturally made to make these performances more and more entertaining and attractive, both to the eye as well as to the ear.

RAS-LILA

In different parts of the Hindi-speaking area, people had different tastes and devotion for different deities or heroes, and their faith and devotion varied, different types of drama developed in different places. Consequently, we find three different types of early drama rising in different regions of the Hindi-speaking area. In Avadh, [illegible] Ras-lila [illegible] although [illegible] and [illegible] their [illegible] of [illegible] which [illegible] of Ras-lila [illegible]

1. [illegible] The Theatre page [illegible]
2. [illegible]

of Rama was represented in a dramatic form throughout the month of Ashwin.

In Upper India Ram-Lila occupies the place and season which Durga Puja does in Bengal. Both are marked by exceptional grandeur. The festival of Rama, in its present form at any rate, is said to have originated in the famous version of the Ramayana of Tulsi Das.[1] In almost every town and important village of the above-mentioned districts, nearly the whole of the Ramayana (used to be) is recited during the month of Ashwin, and whatever events are capable of being represented are exhibited simultaneously with the recitations. The scenery is sought to be made real as far as possible; for instance, when the Ganges or the Sea is required, the scene is shifted to the bank of some pond or stream. Various gardens and parks represent different forests and gardens mentioned in the poem, and different temples and buildings represent the palaces of the princes.

RAS- LILA

In Mathura, Vrindavan and the surrounding areas, a second type of performance popularly known as the Ras-lila was more popular, and is no less popular today. In Ras-lila the romantic love of Krishna and Radha is beautifully represented; two small boys impersonate Krishna and Radha, while others assume the role of cowherds and milkmaids. As in the case of Ram-lila, so here also the devout spectators are so credulous and full of devotion that, for the time, they verily worship the boy as Krishna himself. As the performance formally begins with the praise of Swami Vallabhacharya and his successors, it is reasonable to hold that Ras-lila originated after Vallabacharya (1479- 1531 A.D.)[2]

Even today the Ras-dharis (who perform Ras-lila) are by no means extint, although the cinema and the changed trend of life has sufficiently restricted their scope. During the rainy season and particularly the month of Shrawan (Sawan), the Rasdhari troupes are very busy in places like Mathura and Vrindavan, which are

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1. Yajnik: Indian Theatre, page 59.
2. Dr. Som Nath Gupta: Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas, page 15.

associated with the lifestory of the deity. Thousands of visitors from the East Punjab and other parts of the country flock to these places even today during this month. Till recently, the Rasdhari teams used to visit different places as far as East Punjab in the North, Rajputana in the West and Hyderabad in the Deccan.

NAUTANKI

In the North-Western U.P., Delhi and especially in the southern part of the Punjab there was popular another type of performance popularly known as "Nautanki' or 'Sāngīt'.[1] Like the Rasdhari troupes, these 'Nautankis' also visited very distant places; like Raslila, these 'Nautankis' too had a proper stage, which was likewise very simple and of a domestic nature.[2] Apart from representing the events connected with the Epics and the Puranas, more modern and mundane heroes also served as the themes of the performances of these 'Nautankis'. The stories of Gopi Chand, Puran Bhakta and Hakikat Rai are quite popular with the East Punjab masses even today; the last named belongs to the reign of Shah Jehan, while the former two are related to early Hindu history; performances dealing with the main events of their lives were frequently staged by these 'nautankis' often with conventional music and dancing.[3]

The origin of 'Nautanki' or 'Sāngīt' (सांगीत) is uncertain. As Dr. Som Nath Gupta thinks[4], the title 'Sāngīt' or 'Sāng' might have been derived from the word 'Sangīt' (संगीत) which means music. The dominance of संगीत (music) in these सांगीतs supports this suggestion. Or again the word 'Sāngit' might have stood for 'Sāng' or 'Naqal' which was prevalent in medieval times as a popular means of entertainment.[5]

INFLUENCE OF THESE FORMS ON LATER HINDI DRAMA

Ordinarily it is in the form of dialogue that Ram-lila comes

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1. Dr. Shri Krishna Lal, Adhunik Hindi Sahitya Ka ~~Itihas~~ Vikas, pages 199-201.
2. Ibid, page 201.
3. Ibid.
4. Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas, page 16.
5. Ibid. Also see R. B. Saksena : A History of Urdu literature, page 349.

connected with the influence of the deity. Thousands of visitors from the east Punjab and other parts of the country flock to these places even today during this month. Till recently, the Naqqals [illegible] used to visit different places as far as east Punjab in the north, Rajputana in the west and Hyderabad in the Deccan.

BHAGATAN

In the north-western U.P., Sind and especially in the southern part of the Punjab there was popular another type of performance popularly known as 'Bhagatan' or 'Bhagatti'.[1] Like the Rasdhari troupes, these 'Bhagtiyas' also visited very distant places. Like Raslila, these 'Bhagtiyas' too had a proper stage, which was [illegible] very simple and of a domestic nature.[2] Apart from performing the mystic dramas with the [illegible] and the Puranas, [illegible] and [illegible] also served as the themes of the performances of these 'Bhagtiyas'. The stories of Gopi Chand, Puran Bhagat and [illegible], etc. were quite popular with the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible], [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible], this [illegible] was [illegible] related to [illegible]; performances [illegible] with the [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] frequently staged by these 'Bhagtiyas', [illegible] with [illegible] music and dancing.

The origin of 'Bhagtiyas' or 'Bhagatti' ([illegible]) is uncertain. [illegible], the title 'Bhagat' or 'Bhagtiya' might have been derived from the word 'Bhagti' ([illegible]), which means [illegible]. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the word 'Bhagti' [illegible] [illegible] 'Bhagti' [illegible] travelled in [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible].

[illegible] OF [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] it is in the [illegible] that [illegible]

1. [illegible]
2. [illegible]
3. [illegible]

before the audience; it is lacking in stage and other dramatic elements. Besides, the subject-matter of Ram-lila is so unwieldy that it does not suit the restricted times, space and action of drama.[1] In fact Ram-lila could not cross the strictly religious bounds and did not develop into full-fledged drama. Consequently the type of drama that developed under the influence of Ram-lila contained nothing more than conversation in prose or verse. Some specimens of this kind of drama are available before Bharatendu; plays like 'Hanuman Natak' of Hriday Ram (17th century A.D.) 'Ram-lila Vihar Natak' of Krishna Sharma (19th century) 'Janaki-Ram-Charitra-Natak' of Hari Ram (19th century) etc. are nothing more than metrical narrations of the various events of the Ramayana.

On the other hand the development of drama is noticeable more in Ras-lila. In Ras-lila are represented the love-sports of Krishna and Radha along with other milkmaids, and these being small in size and short in duration could suit the limited time, space and action of drama. Ras-lila made use of the stage too, although it was very simple and ordinary. Its sweet, melodious songs, being mostly the stanzas and lyrics from Sur Das were simply captivating.

But these Ras-lilas too were not altogether free from defects; they had very little of dialogue, which is the singular force of drama. Still less they had action, so necessary for the development of the plot of drama. Simple and concise as they were, they lacked[2] the epic-grandeur, forceful dialogue and character-beauty, which were the main features of Ram-lila. In 'Nautanki' the medium of conversation was verse; and action, though sufficiently more than in Ras-lila was still meagre for drama; this meagreness of action was often made up by introducing melodramatic[3] element.

As a matter of fact, a balanced and wise combination of the prominent features of both Ram-lila and Ras-lila — music and sentiment of Ras-lila, and epic-grandeur, forceful dialogue and character-painting of Ram-lila would have developed into an excellent form of drama. But as this did not actually take place, we can say that

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1. Adhunik Hindi Sahitya Ka Vikas, page 199.
2. Dr. Shri Krishna Lal; Adhunik Hindi Sahitya Ka Vikas, page 200
3. Ibid page 202.

although some of the essential elements of drama were present in each one of these three medieval forms of entertainment- viz. Ram-lila Ras-lila and the 'Nautanki',- still, later Hindi drama did not develop directly from these forms.[1] These performances, inspite of their partly dramatic nature, maintained their independent existence from the medieval to the modern times. Doubtless, they had a plot culled mostly from religious books and related to the great personalities of the past; also they had a melodious music and a captivating classical dance. Still they could not flourish into full fledged drama due to various defects which we have pointed out above.

Besides, the drama of the Parsi Theatrical Companies which introduced a scientific stage, beautiful scenery, attractive make-up and cheap entertainment[2] in their theatre gradually restricted the audience and liking for these forms. The simple, rustic stage used in these performances had no adequate force to compete with the comparatively modern, more advanced and scientific stage that the Parsi Theatres borrowed from the West.[3] Consequently, these performances, instead of developing into some maturer form, gradually declined and the Parsi theatres held the day for a number of years.

In addition to these three main medieval forms of drama, many other minor performances were also popular in different parts of the country; in his 'The Dramas and the Dramatic Dances of Non-European Races'. Prof. Ridgeway[4] has referred to some such performances which were given on the occasion of various festivals, mostly religious and were connected with the lives of mythological, historical or popular heroes. Another type of performance, popularly known as 'Bhavai' was (and even is) prevalent in Gujrat. 'Bhavai' is coarse and obscene and it is performed in open spaces in street and other public places;[5] no stage or scenery is required, and only a poor curtain occasionally held by two men at each end serves the purpose. But these performances are not very important in reconstructing the history of Hindi Drama.

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1. Dr. Shri Krishana Lal: Adhunik Hindi Sahitya Ka Vikas, page 202
   Dr. L.S.Varshneya; Adhunik Hindi Sahitya page 227- 8.
2. Dr. Shri Krishna Lal: Adhunik Hindi Sahitya Ka Vikas, page 202.
3. Ibid. 4. Cambridge, 1915 page 172 ff
5. R.K. Yajnik: Indian Theatre, page 63.

HINDI DRAMA IN THE NINTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER III.

HINDI DRAMA BEFORE BHARATENDU.

From a chronological study of Sanskrit drama one arrives at the conclusion that the regular chain of Sanskrit drama broke off with the advent of Mohammadan rule in India.[1] It is true that solitary attempts continued to be made in this field even after the Muslim occupation of India, and dozens of Sanskrit plays of different types were written between the twelfth and the twentieth centuries.[2] Still, Sanskrit drama as a regular feature ceased to exist from the eleventh or the twelfth century A.D.

But while the regular chain of Sanskrit drama broke off as early as the eleventh or the twelfth century, the foundations of regular Hindi drama were laid as late as the middle of the ninteenth century, shortly before Bharatendu. It was only from Bharatendu onwards that drama became a regular feature in Hindi literature. In the opening chapter we have briefly noted the various factors respons-ible for this lack of Hindi drama during the interim period. At the same time we find that it was not all of a sudden that full-fledged Hindi drama came into being in the mid-ninteenth century. It was, obviously, preceded by several earlier attempts at drama, which in fact paved the way for its final finished form. Here we shall refer to a few early specimens of that nature which were written either under the influence of the medieval forms of performances (discussed in Chapter II) or under the influence of classical drama.

Some Early Hindi Plays

The earliest specimens of these plays are 'Rukminī Haraṇ' and 'Pārijāt-Haraṇ' written by the famous poet Vidyāpati Thākur in

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1. Keith: Sanskrit Drama Chapter XI. 2. Ibid.

the 14th century. Then in the 17th century, Krishna Jiwan wrote 'Karuṇābharaṇ' which deals with Lord Krishna's sports and Hriday Ram wrote 'Hanuman Natak'; the latter author is said[1] to have written another play called 'Rukmini-Mangal', but that is not extant.

'Prabodha- Chandrodaya' is a well-known Sanskrit drama, written by Krishna Mishra; it is an allegorical play in which Shradha Viveka, Krodha etc. have been personified. This famous Sanskrit play has been translated into Hindi by several writers, the earliest attempt having been made by Maharaj Yashwant Sinh, the ruler of Jodh Pur, who translated it in the middle of the seventeenth century. Although the translation is mostly in verse, yet the entrances and exits are given in prose, and a few prose lines have also been scattered here and there.

Another successful attempt in translating this famous Sanskrit play was made by Brajvasi Das, a Vaishnav of Vrindavan, belonging to the Vallabh sect. His translation (eighteenth century), which is mostly in verse is a nice specimen of Hindi drama before Bharatendu. It would not be out of place to quote a few lines from this translation, which will give us an idea of translator's language and style of versification—

सरधा उवाच

सरधा कही अहै सुख दान। मन की दसा न परत बखान॥
प्रवृत्ती नाम ताकी बर नार। मन को तासो अधिक पियार॥
सो कायादिक बध सुनि कान। सुनत सनेह तजे तिन प्रान॥
ताते मनहिं सोक अधिकाय। चाहिय अब मनहू मरि जाय॥

भक्ति उवाच

होवै याते भलो पुनि कहा जु मन मरि जाय।
सकल काज बिन श्रमहि मन तौ सहजहि बन जाय॥
अरु मनहू बहु कष्ट तें छूट लहै निज रूप।
लीन होय सुख ब्रह्म में जो सब भांति अनूप॥

The next work is 'Shakuntalā' by some poet 'Newaj, who was a protege of Raja Chhatrasal of Bundelkhand (Vik. 1706-1791), and then

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1. Braj Ratna Das; Hindi Natya Sahitya, page 46.

of prince Azam Shah (Vik. 1710-1764); this play was written at the instance of the latter.

Another attempt of the Seventeenth century is 'Dev-Maya-Prapanch' Natak, an allegorical play in six acts, written by Dev[1] (other than the famous poet Dev of the Riti age.) This drama is written under the influence of the Sanskrit allegorical drama 'Prabodha Chandrodaya'. Then in the early ninteenth century Hari Ram wrote 'Janaki-Ram- Charitr-Natak'; it deals with the story of Rama's marriage with Sita. Although the play is in verse, yet lines of 'Khari Boli' prose have been frequently interspersed, and the verse too bears a clear impression of 'Khari Boli'.

'Ram-Lila- Vihar-Natak' of Lakshman Sharan again takes up the story of the marriage of Rama and Sita; it is written in mixed verse and prose, and its language is predominantly 'Khari Boli' of a very refined and polished nature. It gives no date of composition, but on the testimony of its language, which is regular 'Khari Boli',[2] it can be assigned to the ninteenth century.

Slightly better than these previous attempts is 'Anand-Raghu-Nandan Natak' of Maharaj Vishv Nath Sinh of Rewa, which belongs to the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Like his father Mahraj Jay Sinh, the author of this play was also a great lover of art and literature. He is known to have written about thirty works[3] in all, most of which deal with the life of Rama. His 'Anand-Raghu-Nandan Natak', which is admitted by Bharatendu as the first original Hindi[4] drama, is a play in seven acts; it deals with the story of Rama, from his birth to his coronation after return from exile. The play has been written on classical lines; it has the Nandi, the Prastavana, the Bharat-Vakya and the acts have not been sub-divided into scenes.

As the playwright has tried to handle the entire unwieldy plot of the Ramayana, his work has not been a good success; the number of characters is overwhelming for a play and consequently due attention

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1. ~~Ibid.~~ → 2. Braj Ratna Das Hindi Natya Sahitya, page 46.

3. Ibid page 49. 4. Introduction to 'Vidya-Sundar'.

has not been paid to characterisation. For the most part the author has used Braj Bhasha both for prose and verse; but extracts of Sanskrit, Persian, Paishachi, Marathi and even English have been occasionally introduced, just to parade author's knowledge of these languages; otherwise their use does not add any force or charm to the play, and in certain cases appears unnatural.

From the artistic point of view 'Anand-Raghu-~~Raghni~~-Nandan' is not of great merit, but as it is the first original drama in Hindi its importance cannot be minimised.[1]

Characteristics of These Plays.

As we have stated in Chapter I,[2] Hindi prose in its standard form is hardly a hundred years old; it did not exist during the period under discussion. Naturally, therefore, these early plays are mostly written in verse, and Dr. Som Nath Gupta[3] has rightly called them 'Dramatic Poems' than plays.

Secondly, in this period, the 'Khgri Boli' or the new standard form of Hindi language had not yet come into prominence in literature, although it had already come into existence under the Moghul period.[4] Consequently we find that with the exception of one or two later attempts (e.g. Ram-Lila-Vihar Natak) the language of these plays is Braj Bhasha and not Khari Boli.

Thirdly, most of these plays do not conform to the general rules of drama; they are 'Nataks' merely because their authors have called them by that name or because they have employed dialogue as a means of the development of their plot. Excepting the presence of conversation, these works are mostly lacking in the essential characteristics of drama (the exceptions being 'Anand-Raghu-Nandan', + to some extent 'Prabodha-Chandrodaya'); in many of them even the entrances and exits of characters are not given, while the names of characters have just been written on one side. Moreover, these attempts are

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1. Dr. Som Nath Gupta: Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas, page 6.
2. See page 3 above.
3. Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas; pages 4 & 7.
4. Ram Chandra Shukla, Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihas; Punjab edition pages 334-335.

mostly lacking in the power of characterisation, beauties of plot-construction, and are worthless for the stage. At best they are versified conversation, dealing mostly with the episodes of the Ramayana, and can be better styled as Kavyas than Natakas.

Rise of Regular Hindi Drama.

So far only stray attempts had been made in the field of drama by different writers from time to time. Hereafter, from 1859 (the year in which 'Nahush Natak' of Giridhar Das appeared) a regular chain of literary drama in Hindi began, and it has continued to the present day with remarkable progress. The factors that led to the rise of regular Hindi drama make an interesting study. As we have said before,[1] it was not from the Ram-Lila, Ras-Lila or similar other forms that Hindi drama developed; it rose quite independent of these medieval performances as we shall show here.

Firstly, the peace and lull that followed the British occupation of India, and the subsequent sense of security from internal disorder resulted in a mighty literary renascence in India, which paved the way for Hindi drama, beside laying the foundations of Hindi prose.[2] Moreover, during the latter half of the eighteenth and the first half of the ninteenth centuries Europeans opened many dramatic clubs[3] and theatres in big cities like Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Patna for their entertainment; in these theatres they used to stage either some English plays or the translations of Kalidasa's 'Shakuntala' or Bhavabhuti's 'Uttara-rama-Charita'. This gave an impetus to the indigenous talent in that field.

At this very time Western scholars commenced a careful and thorough study of Sanskrit literature; they introduced it for the first time in Engald and other European countries and translated well-known Sanskrit plays and epics in English, German, French and other languages of the Continent. Sir Monier Williams was a great lover of Sanskrit who could not resist the charm of translating the immortal

1. See page 19 above. 2. F.E. Keay, Hindi Literature; pages 9-10.
3. Yajnik : Indian Theatre, Chapter IV. V

play of Kalidasa; again Goethe, the great German poet and philospher, praised this drama (although he read it only in translation) in memorable words.[1]

This rapid interest of Western scholars in Sanskrit literature directed the attention and genius of our literary men also to that language and its literature. With the introduction of the lithographic press in India in the beginning of the ninteenth century, books began to be published rapidly, and they were now available at cheaper rates. This encouraged our scholars to publish the translations of their leading Sanskrit works into vernaculars; but alongside of their active interest in Sanskrit literature they also devoted themselves to the study of English language and literature as English had now become the official language of the country. Striking similarities, in certain aspects, between the classical Sanskrit drama and Elizabethan drama,[2] as also between the Sanskrit stage and the Elizabethan stage[3] gave another incentive to the rise of Hindi drama; consequently, Shakespeare and his contemporaries began to be studied with interest, and their plays also began to be translated.[4] Moreover, drama itself was not a new thing for the Indians, although its chain had been broken for some centuries in the middle. With the spread of education and advancement of learning under the new British rule, people experienced a mental development, and they began to realise the need of reviving drama for the proper development of their literature.

In short, although in the latter half of the ninteenth century Indian life maintained much of its ancient Indian tradition, yet it received a direct influence of the culture and literature of the West, which our Hindi scholars now started to introduce in their own literature. Of these progressive writers, who took the forward leap with the time, the name of Gopal Chandra alias Giridhar Das (1833-1860) deserves special mention; he was a great scholar of Sanskrit and Hindi and man of progressive views. In him we find the first genius of Hindi, who started the tradition of literary Hindi drama.

1. Keith: Sanskrit Drama, page 280. 2. Keith : Sanskrit Drama, page 355. Also A.A. Macdonell: A History of Sanskrit literature, London 1900; pages 350-351.
3. Yajnik: Indian Theatre, page 35 and page 50. 4. See Chapter VI below.

According to Bharatendu he wrote about forty works, of which 'Nahush Natak' is the only play.[1] Unfortunately, this valuable first drama of Hindi language is not available in full. The fragment that is extant contains the Benedictory verse, the Prastavana, and the first act. But although the play is not available complete today, yet it appears that it was not left incomplete by the playwright, as Bhara-tendu has given summary of the plot of the complete play,[2] and not only of that part which is available now. According to Bharatendu, 'Nahush Natak' is the first Hindi drama that closely conforms to the principles of drama.[3] This play, as is clear from the extant portion, has been written on classical lines; in the classical manner it begins with the benedictory verse and has the Prastavana also; again a hint is thrown on the plot of the play in the conversation of Sutradhara and his companions in the classical style.

As we have said just before,[4] the great appreciation of Sanskrit literature by Western scholars diverted the Indian talent also to the study of that literature, and as a result appeared in 1861 Raja Lakshman Sinh's translation of the 'Shakuntala'. Originally this translation was all in prose,[5] and even Sanskrit verses had been rendered in prose. Some twenty years later the author got it re-printed, substituting verse for original verse. Today, this mixed prose-verse version of this translation is very popular, and is prescribed from time to time by several Universities for different examinations.

The prose of this translations is regular 'Khari Boli' as we can see from the following extracts-

अनुसूया — (हौले प्रियंवदा से) सखी मैं भी इसी सोच विचार में हूं। अब इससे कुछ पूछूंगी। (प्रगट) महात्मा, तुम्हारे मधुर वचनों के विश्वास में आकर मेरा जी यह पूछने को चाहता है कि तुम किस राजवंश के भूषण हो? और किस देश की प्रजा को विरह में व्याकुल छोड़ यहां पधारे हो? क्या कारण है जिससे तुमने अपने कोमल गात को इस कठिन तपोवन में आकर पीड़ित किया है?(6) (Act I)

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1. 'Natak' Bharatendu Natakavali, edited by Braj Ratna Das, 2nd Volume page 480.
2. Ibid page 478-9.
3. Ibid page 478.
4. See page 26 above.
5. Braj Ratna Das: Hindi Natya Sanitya, page 52.

(6). अनसूया — सखि, ममापि अस्ति कौतूहलम्। प्रक्ष्यामि तावदेनम्। (प्रकाशम्) आर्यस्य मधुरालाप-जनितो विस्रम्भः मां मन्त्रयते। कतमः आर्येण राजर्षिवंशः अलंक्रियते। कतमो वा विरहपर्युत्सुक-जनः कृतो देशः। किं निमित्तं वा सुकुमारतरोऽपि तपोवनपरिश्रमस्य आत्मा पदं उपनीतः।

But the verse has been couched in Braj Bhasha; e.g.

सरसिज लगत सुहावनो यदपि लियो ढकि पंक।
कारी रेखा कलंक हू लसति कलाधर अंक॥
पहरे बल्कल बसन यह लागति नीकी बाल।
कहा न भूषन होइ जो रूप लिख्यो विधि भाल॥[1] (Act I)

Or again, हिमांशु चन्दा सों कुसुमशर तोसो कहत क्यों।
नहीं सांचे दोऊ इन गुनन मोसे जनन को॥
खरी छोडे ज्वाला वह किरिन पाला संग धरी।
तुह बज्राकारी निज सुमन के बानन करे॥[2] (Act III)

As is evident from the extracts quoted above, author's control over language is commendable, as also his poetic skill. If we compare these translated extracts with the original Sanskrit extracts (which have been quoted in the foot notes), we arrive at the conclusion that the translator has achieved great success in retaining the sense and force of the original, and his translation is, at the same time, no less interesting than the original. The author has also been very careful in avoiding the use of Persian words in the whole of his translation.

Apart from these literary dramas which mostly followed the classical canons of dramaturgy, another type of drama also developed side by side. This second type of drama aimed more at entertainment than artistic perfection and was patronised by various theatrical companies. The earliest available drama of this kind is 'Indar Sabha' which was written by Agha Hasan Amanat, and was staged in 1853 at the court of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah of Avadh.

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(1) सरसिजमनुविद्धं शैवलेनापि रम्यं
मलिनमपि हिमांशोर्लक्ष्म लक्ष्मीं तनोति।
इयमधिकमनोज्ञा वल्कलेनापि तन्वी
किमिव हि मधुराणां मण्डनं नाकृतीनाम्॥

(2) तव कुसुमशरत्वं शीतरश्मित्वमिन्दोः
द्वयमिदमयथार्थं दृश्यते मद्विधेषु।
विसृजति हिमगर्भैरग्निमिन्दुर्मयूखै-
स्त्वमपि कुसुमबाणान् वज्रसारीकरोषि॥

In fact the language of this drama is not pure Hindi; it is more Urdu than Hindi and for this reason it has been styled as the first drama of the Urdu language.[1] But since its language, on the whole, is not very hard Urdu and is rather a mixture of Hindi and Urdu it can as well be discussed under Hindi drama. 'Indar Sabha' is an opera and two-third of its bulk consists of songs; the remaining one-third, which consists of conversation, is again in verse. When the characters appear on the stage for the first time they first introduce themselves to the audience; for example, Indra in his own court introduces himself in the following manner—

राजा हूं मैं कौम का और इन्दर मेरा नाम।
बिन परियों के दीद के मुझे नहीं आराम। etc.

Another nymph introduces herself in the following way—

गाती हूं मैं और नाच सदा काम है मेरा।
आफ़ाक़ में पुखराज परी नाम है मेरा। & so on

In the same way other characters also introduce themselves as they make their first appearance on the stage. The plot of this play is very thin, the action is very weak and there is absolutely no characterisation.[2]

Much for the melody of its songs, its gorgeousness and splendour of its scenic effects 'Indar Sabha' became very popular with the masses; its atmosphere of hilariousness was a strong attraction for the low taste people. 'Indar Sabha' remained popular for half a century and was staged by several Parsi theatrical companies. So great was its success and popularity that Madari Lal produced another 'Indar-Sabha' on the basis of Amanat's opera, and other imitation like 'Machhandar-Sabha' and 'Bandar- Sabha' were also produced. So great was its demand that it was translated in several languages including German and there are atleast forty editions of 'Indar-Sabha' in the India Office Library.[3]

1. R.B. Saksena: A History of Urdu Literature, page 350-51.
2. Ibid , page 352.
3. R.B. Saksena: A History of Urdu Literature, page 352-3.

In fact the language of this drama is not pure Hindi; it is more or less mixed and for this reason it has been styled as the first drama of the Urdu language.[1] But since its language, on the whole, is not very hard Urdu and is rather a mixture of Hindi and Urdu, it has also been discussed under Hindi drama. 'Indar Sabha' is an opera and two-third of its bulk consists of songs; the remaining one-third, which consists of conversation, is again in verse. When the characters appear on the stage for the first time they first introduce themselves to the audience: for example, Indra in his own court introduces himself in the following manner—

राजा हूँ मैं कौम का और इन्दर मेरा नाम।
बिन परियों की दीद के मुझे नहीं आराम, etc.

Another nymph introduces herself in the following way—

[illegible]
[illegible]

In the same way other characters also introduce themselves as they make their first appearance on the stage. The plot of this play is very thin, the action is very weak and there is absolutely no characterisation.[2]

Both for the melody of its songs, its gorgeousness and splendour of theatrical effects 'Indar Sabha' became very popular with the masses. [illegible] was a strong attraction for the low taste people. 'Indar Sabha' remained popular for a long time and was staged by several Parsi theatrical companies. So great was its success and popularity that [illegible] produced another 'Indar-Sabha' on the model of Amanat's opera, and other [illegible] like [illegible]-Sabha' and 'Bandar-Sabha' were also produced. So great was the demand that it was translated in several languages including German [illegible] 'Indar Sabha' in the India Office Library.[3]

1. R.B. Saksena: A History of Urdu Literature, page [illegible].
2. Ibid, page [illegible].
3. R.B. Saksena: A History of Urdu Literature, page [illegible].

The tradition of this drama which aimed merely at entertainment and of which 'Indar Sabha' was the earliest example was later carried on by various professional theatrical companies, mostly run by the Parsis. A separate Chapter[1] has been devoted to these theatrical dramas and, therefore, we need not carry this topic further here. But one important feature of these plays was, that as these professional companies had no superior aim in view than making money, they cared and tried to cater to the low and unpolished taste of the general public, and provided them with cheap, inartistic and even vulgar stuff; the genuine dramatic art and refinement were lacking in their works; and it was this lack of art and rush of vulgarity and cheap entertainment of these theatres[2] that shocked Bharatendu Harishchandra who resolved to revive the old tradition of literary drama.

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1. See Chapter VII of this thesis.
(2) 'Natak': Braj Ratna Das: Bharatendu Natakavali, Vol.II. page 480.

CHAPTER IV.

BHARATENDU HARISHCHANDRA

Bharatendu Harishchandra, the father of Hindi drama, was born at Benares on Monday, the 9th September[1] 1850. His mother died when he was only a child of five, and while he was hardly eleven his father also left for his heavenly abode. But although Bharatendu was only moderately educated, his great genius and keen observation enabled him to produce memorable works of literature. He was born in an age when a conflict was going on between the ancient and modern schools of thought[2]; while there were people who riduculed everything that was old and Indian, there were others who were determined against all that was modern and Western. The baffling problems of the day were to find out as to which form of Hindi language and literature would be acceptable to the majority of general[3] people, and how to make Hindi literature as rich and advanced as the Bengali literature.

At this critical time, which greatly needed the guidance and support of a true genius, rose Bharatendu. He carefully surveyed the whole situation and devoted himself to the task; in literature and especially in drama, he introduced a healthy combination of the ancient and the modern, the Indian and the alien, as we shall show later in this[4] chapter. And once he opened the blocked avenue of Hindi drama[5], dozens of his contemporaries and successors jumped out to follow in his footsteps, and to carry on the literary traditions established by him.

Bharatendu rendered valuable service to various branches of Hindi literature; but he noticed with sad surprise that Hindi literature was miserably lacking in drama[6]. He had witnessed the

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1. Braj Ratna Das; Hindi Natya Sahitya, page 59.
2. Braj Ratna Das, Bharatendu Natakavali, Vol.II Introduction page 27-31.
3. Ibid. 4. See page 47 ff. below.
5. See Chapters V & VI of this thesis.
6. 'Natak' Bharatendu Natakavali, edited by Braj Ratna Das, Vol.II page 482.

the development of drama in Bengal, and had also studied Sanskrit[1] and English drama. So, with firm resolve and by dint of his great genius, hard work and literary taste, he sought to bring Hindi drama on a new road of life.

Dramas of Bharatendu.

In all Bharatendu wrote eighteen plays. Of these, one 'Pravas Natak' was left incomplete, and even the fragment is not available today. He translated four plays from Sanskrit, one from Prakrit, one from Bengali, one from English and wrote ten original plays. His career as a dramatist began from 1868, in which year he wrote 'Vidya Sundar', 'Ratnavali' and 'Pravas'; thereafter we find a gap of four years, and no play is known to have been written during this period. In 1872 he wrote 'Pakhand-Vidamban', in 1873 he finished 'Vaidiki Himsa Himsa na Bhavati', and 'Dhananjay Vijay'; in 1874 he wrote 'Prem-Jogini' and in 1875 appeared his 'Satya-Harishchandra' and the translation of 'Mudra Rakshasa'. Next year (1876) he wrote four plays namely 'Karpura-Manjari', 'Vishasy Visham Aushadham', 'Chandravali' and 'Bharat Durdasha'. In the next three years he produced no drama, except revising the translation of 'Bharat Janani'. In 1880 he produced 'Nil-Devi' and translated 'Merchant of Venice' under the title 'Durlabh Bandhu'; in 1881 he wrote 'Andher-Nagari', a farce and in his last year (1884) he wrote 'Sati Pratap' which was left incomplete, & his 'Natak' which is an essay on drama. Bharatendu passed away on 6th January 1885.

A glance over the dates of composition of Bharatendu's plays shows that he was a man of free will, who would not write dramas just for the sake of writing them; rather it was after his own sweet will and inspiration that he wrote these plays and therefore we find that sometimes he would finish four plays in one year (1876), while at others he may spend four years (1868-72) without undertaking any such enterprise. Another reason for these gaps can be that, beside the

1. 'Natak', Bharatendu Natakavali, edited by Braj Ratna Das Vol.II page 482.

task of writing dramas, he was also busy with the task of contributing to other branches of Hindi literature.

Bharatendu's plays can be divided into two main heads (I) Original plays and (II) Translations. We shall discuss his original plays later, as they are more in number and importance. First we shall deal with his translations.

Translations of Bharatendu.

It was with 'Pravas Natak' in 1868 that Bharatendu began his career as a playwright; but his first available drama is his translation of Harsha's 'Ratnavali'. In Bharatendu's opinion 'Ratnavali' is, next to Kalidasa's 'Shakuntala', the most interesting Sanskrit drama, as he writes in the Introduction--

"शकुन्तला के सिवाय और सब नाटकों में रत्नावली नाटिका बहुत अच्छी और पढ़ने वालों को आनन्द देने वाली है इस हेतु से मैंने पहिले इसी नाटिका का तर्जुमा किया है और जो ईश्वरेच्छा अनुकूल है और आप गुणग्राहकों की अनुग्रह-दृष्टि है तो धीरे धीरे कुछ नाटकों का तर्जुमा कर प्रकाशित होता जायेगा।"[1]

Although these words of Bharatendu imply that he translated the play in full, yet only a short fragment of it, consisting only of the Nandi, the Prastavana, and the Vishkambhaka is available.

The same year (1868) Bharatendu wrote his 'Vidya-Sundar',[1] which is based on Sanskrit 'Chaura Panchashika' of 'Chaura Kavi',[2] but Yatindra Mohan Thakur's work, has also been closely followed. As the original Bengali drama is not available, it cannot be said with certainty whether it is a translation of that play or only an adaptation. The play is complete in three acts, with four, three and three scenes respectively; it deals with an interesting story of the love and secret marriage of Vidya, princess of Vardhman, and Sundar prince of Kanchipur. There is no Prastavana to this play, nor are the verses very frequent. No doubt 'Vidya Sundar' does not rise to the standard of Bharatendu's later plays, and suffers from some discrepancies in the development of plot and the proper sequence of events;[3] still, in the absence of the original Bengali drama we cannot say how far is Bharatendu responsible for these discrepancies and defects.

1. See Bharatendu's Introduction to the play 2. Ibid.
3. Dr. Som Nath Gupta Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas, pages 40-41.

In 1872, Bharatendu translated the third act of Krishna Mishra's famous play 'Prabodha Chandradaya' and named it 'Pakhand Vidamban'. Karuna, Shanti and Shraddha are the main personified characters in this play, in which the superiority of Vaishnavism is sought to be established.[1] Bharatendu's translation is faithful to the original and its language shows signs of maturity than that of 'Vidya-Sundar'.

In 1873 appeared Bharatendu's translation of 'Dhananjaya-Vijaya', a Vyayoga written in Sanskrit by Kanchana Kavi. The play deals with the battle of Arjuna with the Kauravas on the last day of their exile in cognito, Arjuna's victory and the decision of the king of Virat to offer his daughter Uttara's hand in marriage to Abhimanya. In translating prose and verse Bharatendu has been faithful to the original except in the Nandi and the Bharat-Vakya; in the Nandi, Bharatendu has repeated only one Sanskrit verse in place of three stanzas of the original play, and in the end also he has made a slight change in the Bharat-Vakya. This translation is even better than Bharatendu's previous attempts.[2]

After complering 'Saya-Harishchandra' Bharatendu translated 'Mudra- Rakshasa' of Vishakhadatta. Being the only play of its kind in entire Sanskrit literature, 'Mudra- Rakshahsa' has its own place and worth. A close comparative study of the translation and the original betrays (as we shall try to show by one or two extracts below) that Bharatendu has been quite successful in translating this difficult and lengthy Sanskrit drama; it mostly retains the charm and force of the original, and read independently it appears to be an original composition. Bharatendu has made some minor additions and alterations here and there; for example in the original Sanskrit drama there is no equivalent for Bharatendu's following stanza of the Nandi-

भरित नेह नव नीर नित, बरसत सुरस अथोर।
जयति अपूरब घन कोऊ, लखि नाचत मन मोर॥

This stanza is obviously of Bharatendu's own, as it occurs in Bharatendu's translations of 'Karpura- Manjari' and 'Prem Jogini' also.

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1. It is clear from the last two pages of the play ; ~~e.g.~~ comparison.

2. Dr. Som Nath Gupta: Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas, page 32.

3 The eighth edition (1935) of the 'Mudra-Rakshasa' published by the 'Nirnaya Sagar Press' & edited by Kashinath Trimbak has been used for

The next stanza of Bharatendu/is quite a faithful and success-ful translation of the original as we can see by comparison:

'कौन है सीस पै' 'चन्द्रकला' 'कहा याको है नाम यही त्रिपुरारी',
'हां यही नाम है, भूल गई किमि जानत हू तुम प्रान-पियारी'।।
'नारिहिं पूछत चन्द्रहिं नाहिं', 'कहै विजया यदि चंद्र लबारी'।
यो गिरिजै छलि गंग छिपावत ईस हरौ सब पीर तुम्हारी ।।

The Sanskrit original for the above translation is as follows-

धन्या केयं स्थिता ते शिरसि शशिकला किं नु नामैतदस्याः
नामैवास्यास्तदेतत्परिचितमपि ते विस्मृतं कस्य हेतोः।
नारीं नारीं पृच्छामि नेन्दुं कथयतु विजया न प्रमाणं यदीन्दुः
देव्या निह्नोतुमिच्छोरिति सुरसरितं शाठ्यमव्याद्विभोर्वः ।।

Again, in the original, the sixth act closes with the follow-ing-

राक्षसः — (स्वगतम्) अहो दुर्बोधश्चाणक्य बटो र्नीति मार्गः। कुतः,
यदि च शकटो नीतः शत्रोर्मतेन ममान्तिकं
किमिति निहतः क्रोधावेशाद्वधाधिकृतो जनः।
अथ न कृतकं तादृक्कष्टं कथं नु विभावये-
दिति मम मतिस्तर्कारूढा न पश्यति निश्चयम् ।।
(विचिन्त्य) नायं निस्त्रिंशकालः प्रथममिह कृते घातकानां विघाते
नीतिः कालान्तरेण प्रकटयति फलं किं तया कार्यमत्र।
औदासीन्यं न युक्तं प्रियसुहृदि गते मत्कृतामेव घोरां
व्यापत्तिं ज्ञातमस्य स्वतनुमहमिमां निष्क्रयं कल्पयामि ।।
(इति निष्क्रान्ताः सर्वे)

And Bharatendu has translated it in the following manner-

राक्षस-(आप ही आप) उस चाणक्य बटु का नीतिमार्ग कुछ समझ नहीं पड़ता क्योंकि —
सकट बच्यौ जो ताकहे तो क्यों घातक-घात।
जाल भयो का खेल मैं कछु समझ्यौ नहिं जात ।।
(सोचकर) नाहिं शस्त्र को यह काल यासों मीत जीवन जोइहै।
जौ नीति सोचैं या समय तो व्यर्थ समय नसाइहै ।।
चुप रहनहु नाहि जोग जब मम हित चंदन विपत्ति पर्यौ।
तासों बचावन प्रियहि अबहम देह निज विक्रय करौं।।
(तलवार फैंक कर जाता है)

As we can see by comparison, Bharatendu's translation of this portion, especially of the first verse carries only the idea of the original and does not do full justice to it. In the same way in the beginning of the seventh act, while there are two Prakrit verses spoken by the 'Chandal', Bharatendu has translated

the first verse in prose and the second in verse; similarly there is a great difference in the original and the translation towards the close of the seventh act also. Such discrepancies and differences between Bharatendu's translation and the original Sanskrit play are quite numerous, though of a very minor importance, it cannot be said with certainty whether this has been intentionally done by Bharatinedu, or he translated some other recension of the Mudrarakshahsa, in which these readings might have been in conformity with Bharatendu's translation. Any how, Bharatendu's translation is very beautiful, lively and forceful as we can see from the extracts quoted above and also from the following-

उपजे आछे खेत में, मूरखहू के धान।
सघन होनमें धान के, चाहिय न गुनी किसान॥

The Sanskrit original for this translation is -

चीयते बालिशस्यापि सत्क्षेत्रपतिता कृषिः
न शालेः स्तम्बकरिता वप्तुर्गुणमपेक्षते ॥(1)

In the introduction the translator has given the historical background of the play; and in the appendix he had added certain songs, which he has suggested to be sung between two acts and other appropriate places, in this way giving relief to the audience tired by the intrigues and war-atmosphere of the play.

'Karpura-Manjari' is again the only play of its kind; it is a Sattaka, all written in Prakrit. The original Prakrit play was written by Rajashekhara, and has four acts only; it is a love-drama, rich in humour as well. Bharatendu's translation of the play is very beautiful and lively, though not very faithful to the original; he has also made use of some stanzas of other famous acts like Dev, Padmakar etc. also.

Having successfully tried his hand at translating Sanskrit, Prakrit and Bengali plays, Bharatendu now turned his attention towatds English drama; in 1880 he translated Shakespeare's 'Merchant of Venice' under the title 'Durlabh Bandhu'. This play was translated by Bharatendu with the help of one of his graduate friend, Baleshwar

1. Act I, Verse No.3

Prasad, and also on the basis of a Bengali work 'Sur Lata'.[1] Bharatendu left his translation incomplete, and it was later completed by Pt. Rama Shankar Vyas and Babu Radha Krishna Das; we have dealt with this work in Chapter VI under 'Translations'.[2]

A close study of these translations side by side with the original plays shows that, on the whole, Bharatendu has proved to be a very successful translator. His translations, inspite of minor defects pointed out above, bear ample testimony to his ability, genius and skill, his command over Sanskrit, Prakrit and Hindi languages, and his power of translation. Righly speaking it is easier to write an original play than to translate it, retaining the force and interest of the original and at the same time being quite faithful to it. While Bharatendu's effort in translation is commendable in general, his forceful and interesting translation of a difficult and complicated play like the 'Mudra Rakshahsa' certainly adds to his credit.

Original Plays of Bharatendu.

Having finished with translations, we come to the original plays of Bharatendu. They are ten in number and can be divided into four different classes, namely (i) Mythological plays (II) Social and socio-political plays (iii) Historical plays, and (iv) Farces and Satires.

'Satya Harishchandra' (1875) which is one of the best plays of Bharatendu, is the author's first attempt at mythological drama. It is based on the famous Puranic story of Raja Harishchandra, but Kshemishvara's[3] 'Chandra Kaushika' has also served as a source. Acharya Ram Chandra Shukla has classed this play under the translations and has remarked[4] —

"सत्य-हरिश्चन्द्र मौलिक समझा जाता है, पर हमने एक पुराना बंगला नाटक देखा है जिसका वह अनुवाद कहा जा सकता है।"

1. Bharatendu Natakavali, edited by Braj Ratna Das, Vol. II. Introduction, page 15. 2. See page 84 below.
3. See Introduction to the play.
4. Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihas, Punjab edition pages 392-3.

But/he has not given any details about that Bengali drama or its place of availability; so this remark is of little use or importance for critical examination. On the other hand Babu Shyam Sundar Das believes that, as there is great difference in the plot and motif of 'Chandra Kaushika' of Kshemishvara and 'Satya Harishchandra' of Bharatendu, the latter cannot be called a translation[1] of the former, and is, therefore, to be treated as an original composition. Babu Braj Ratna Das also holds the same opinion and says-

"सत्य-हरिश्चन्द्र चण्डकौशिक का अनुवाद कहा ही नहीं जा सकता, क्योंकि कथा-वस्तु में घटना-परिवर्तन कर दिया गया है।"(2)

Bharatendu himself, in his introduction to this play, has said- "राजा हरिश्चन्द्र सूर्यवंश का अट्ठाइसवां राजा .... था। .... इसकी कथा शास्त्रों में बहुत प्रसिद्ध है और संस्कृत में राजा महिपालदेव के समय में आर्य क्षेमीश्वर कवि ने चण्डकौशिक नाटक इन्हीं हरिश्चन्द्र के चरित्र में बनाया है।"

In this way while Bharatendu has mentioned 'Chandra-Kaushika' of Kshemishuara, at the same time he has not said in this introduction or elsewhere that his work is a translation of that Sanskrit drama. Had it been a translation, Bharatendu would not have hesitated in acknowledging that fact as he has done in case of other translations too.

Again, a close comparative study of 'Satya-Harishchndra' and 'Chandra Kaushika' also betrays that Bharatendu's work can, in no way, be called a translation of Kshemishwara's play; the similarities between these two plays are less marked than their differences; for example while Kshemishvara's play aims at giving importance to Vishvamitra's character, Bharatendu's play seeks to glorify Harishchandra; in the former the number of acts is five, while in the latter there are only four acts; furthere there are several events and details of 'Chanda-Kaushika' that are missing in 'Satya-Harishchandra' and vice versa. After a long dicussion and comparison of both these plays, Dr. Som Nath Gupta also arrives at the conclusion that— "अतएव कथावस्तु, चरित्र-चित्रण, उद्देश्य और इन सबके विकास एवं

1. Bharatendu Natakavali edited by B. Shyam Sundar Das, Introduction page 52-53;
2. Bharatendu Natakavali edited by Braj Ratna Das, Vol.I Introduction page 43.

He has not given any details about that Sanskrit drama or its place of availability, so this remark is of little use or importance for critical examination. On the other hand [illegible] under [illegible] then, [illegible] there is great difference in the plot and motif of 'Chanda Kaushika' of Kshemishvara and 'Satya Harishchandra' of Bharatendu, the latter cannot be called a translation of the former, and is, therefore, to be treated as an original composition. Babu Braj Ratna Das also holds the same opinion and says-

"[illegible]"(2)

Bharatendu [illegible], in his introduction to this play, has said-

"[illegible]"

In this way while Bharatendu has mentioned 'Chanda-Kaushika' of Kshemishvara, at the same time he has not said in this introduction or elsewhere that his work is a translation of that Sanskrit drama. Had it been a translation, Bharatendu would not have hesitated in acknowledging that fact as he has done in case of other translations too.

Again, a close comparative study of 'Satya-Harishchandra' and 'Chanda-Kaushika' also shows that Bharatendu's work can, in no way, be called a translation of Kshemishvara's play; the [illegible] between these two plays are less [illegible] than their differences. For example while in Kshemishvara's play [illegible] giving importance to Vishvamitra's character, [illegible] play [illegible] clearly [illegible] in the former the number of acts is five, while in the latter there are only four. Further there are several events and details of 'Chanda-Kaushika' that are omitted in 'Satya-Harishchandra' and vice versa. After a long discussion and [illegible] he concludes [illegible]

[illegible] - "[illegible]"

1. [illegible], page 12-13.
2. [illegible] Braj Ratna Das, [illegible], page [illegible].

प्रतिपादन को देखकर यही निष्कर्ष निकाला जा सकता है कि सत्य-हरिश्चन्द्र मौलिक रचना न होकर रूपान्तरित रचना है, जिसमें लेखक की मौलिकता अधिक है और अनुवाद की मात्रा कम।" (1)

As Bharatendu has said in the introduction, this play is meant for young students, and the erotic element is, therefore, not to be found in this drama; it has also been prescribed at different universities for various examinations from time to time. In this play the author has portrayed the eternal conflict between the ideal of truth, and the attempt to overthrow it. Harishchandra, the hero of the play, represents the ideal of truth; in order to uphold this ideal he abandons his throne and comforts, undergoes a life of hard ordeal and in the end comes out triumphant. The rival character, Vishvamitra, gives the king a series of hard tests, but pleased with the latter's wonderful power of forbearance, truthfulness and character reinstates him in his former honour and glory.

The characters in this play are not invested with any human motive; they rather symbolise the ideal of truth on the one hand and the attempt to over-throw it on the other; therefore characterisation is meagre and the theme thin in execution;[2] but the play significantly represents the romantic tendency in drama as illustrated in its poetical description of rivers, women and palaces;[3] the shower of flowers from the heaven (e.g. in Act IV) and the floating of aerial chariots (e.g. in Act IV) thrill the imagination and invest the play with a spirit of romance.

The play begins with the Nandi, gives the Prastavana also and has no sub-division of acts into scenes; in this way it follows the tradition of classical drama; but, contrary to classical rules, it has only four acts which might be due to Western influence. again, as a rule the succeeding acts in a drama should go on shorten -ing; but in this play the last act is much lenthier[1] than the preced-ing acts. The play suffers from one defect of anachronism also; the author has described the Ganges in Act III; now Harishchandra was one of the ancestors of Bhagiratha, who brought the Ganges down to this world. How could, then, there be any Ganges in the times of Harishchandra ?

1. Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas, page 49; 2. Dr. Indar Nath Madan, Modern Hindi Literature, page 86-87. 3. Ibid.

'Shri Chandravali' (1876) is another attempt at mythological drama, and is again one of the masterpieces of Bharatendu. It has four acts and the play begins with the Nandi, the Prastavana and the Vishkambhaka like classical plays. The erotic sentiment dominates the play, which illustrates the various stages of separation leading to ultimate union. The plot of the play is woven round a woman who pines for the love of her lord, Shri Krishna. But her love is strictly spiritual and not sensual as the author has said in the introduction—

" इसमें तुम्हारे उस प्रेम का वर्णन है, इस प्रेम का नहीं जो संसार में प्रचलित है।"

In this way the Lord represents for the author the sublime principle of spiritual love, while the heroine, Chandravali, symbolises the eternal yearning of man to realise this ideal. Although a sublime principle forms the theme of this play, yet it is not a great success as a piece of dramatic literature; the inordinate length of speeches (e.g. Shuk Dev's soliloquy in the Vishkambhaka; Chandravali's soliloquy and speeches in Act II and Act III etc.) though simple and not boring, destroys the dramatic illusion. Again as the play deals exclusively with love, its emotions and thrills, its obstacles and fruition, there is no variety of action. As in some of his other plays (e.g. Satya Harishchandra) so here too, Bharatendu has strictly followed neither the classical canons of dramaturgy, nor the principles of Western technique; in addition to the combination of these two, this drama displays an influence of the Rasalila also. But inspite of its flaws from the dramatic viewpoint, this play has been very popular among orthodox people with a devotional bent of mind, and has been translated into Sanskrit and Braj Bhasha.[1]

The next mythological drama of Bharatendu is 'Sati-Pratap' (1884). It is the last play of Bharatendu, left incomplete by him in four scenes; in 1892 Radha- Krishna Das completed this play by additing three more scenes to it. The play deals with the ideal love of Savitri and Satyavan and the glorious conquest of true love over death. The play is especially useful for orthodox Hindu ladies, for whom Savitri stands as an embodiment of faithfulness, virtue and true love.

1. Braj Ratna Das, Hindi Natya Sahitya, page 64.

Having discussed his mythological plays, we now come to those plays in which Bharatendu has dealt with social or socio-political problems. The most important play of this category is 'Bharat Durdasha' (1876) in which the playwright deplores the gloomy condition of his country. 'Bharat-Durdasha' is the first effort in Hindi literature in which political matter has been given a dramatic form; the characters of this drama are symbolic, and are the personifications of various abstractions like भारत, भारतदुर्दैव, रोग, आलस्य, अंधकार, निर्लज्जता etc. The play evidences to the author's qualities of extraordinary force in language and fearless expression; the very opening of the play is very impressive and forceful—

रोवहु सब मिलिकै आवहु भारत भाई।
हा हा! भारतदुर्दशा न देखी जाई॥
सब के पहिले जेहि ईश्वर धनबल दीनो।
सब के पहिले जेहि सभ्य विधाता कीनो॥
सब के पहिले जो रूप-रंग-रस-भीनो।
सब के पहिले विद्याफल जिन गहि लीनो॥
अब सब के पीछे सोई परत लखाई।
हा हा! भारतदुर्दशा न देखी जाई॥ etc.

In the fourth act the author enumerates, in the form of symbolic characters, various ills which the country suffers from; among these are disease, indolence, drinking and ignorance etc., and it is shown how these characters try to keep down the fortune of the country. In the closing act the author has described in a very forceful style, the contrast between the glory and greatness of ancient India and its present deplorable condition. And in order to actuate a firm and fast feeling of patriotism in the minds of the audience, the playwright seems to have intentionally given a tragic ending to the play. He has successfully tried to arouse the feelings of sorrow, awakening and enterprise in the minds of the readers for improving their country's lot.

The play of an ordinary length has been divided into six acts,[1] but the acts have not been further divided into scenes, and can be

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1. The play consists of six acts and not of ten as wrongly stated by Dr. Indar Nath Madan in his 'Modern Hindi Literature' page 95.

taken as six scenes of one and the same act. This play also suffers from the disadvantage of many lengthy speeches (e.g. of Bharat-Bhagya in Act VI; of आलस्य & मदिरा in Act IV). A few forceful speeches in verse have been inserted here and there for the purpose of recitation and of sermonising to the audience.

In 1877 Bharatendu wrote 'Bharat-Janani' for which Bengali 'Bharat-Mata' served as a source.[1] It is said that this play was originally written by a friend of Bharatendu, and was submitted to him for revision.[2] The play was so poor that, while revising it, Bharatendu entirely overhauled it, adding a lot from his own. Thus the play, being mainly the work of Bharatendu himself, passed under his name.

In this play again which is a brief opera, the author describes the pitiable condition of the country due to mutual jealousy and quarrels of the Indians. In the end an impassioned appeal is made for patriotism and unity-

धैर्य— .... हे भ्रातृगण! अब उठो और जननी के दुःखानल के निर्वाण का प्रयत्न करो। अभिमान, लोभ, अपमान, आत्मसमाज-प्रशंसा, परजातिनिन्दा इन सबका सावधानपूर्वक परित्याग करो, धैर्य का अवलम्बन करो, सब कोई धैर्य को धारण करो, भाई अवश्य तुम लोगों की कांक्षा पूरी होगी, धीरज धरो, धीरज धरो।

In the style of Bharat-Vakya, Bharat Mata prays to God for reviving the old glory and prosperity of the country—

भारतमाता— बल कला कौशल अमित विद्यावसल मेरे नित लहैं।
पुनि हृदय-ज्ञान-प्रकाश ते अज्ञान-तम तुरतहिं दहैं।
तजि द्वेष ईर्षा द्रोह निंदा देश-उन्नति सब चहैं।
अभिलाख यह जिय पूर्ववत धन्य मोहि सबही कहैं॥

'Prem Jogini' (1874) another short play is incomplete and has four scenes only; here Bharatendu has drawn a real picture of Benares of his times, and has exposed the evils of the religious as well as the aristocratic classes of that city. The Prastavana of this play bears some reflection of author's own life; in the following speech of the Sutradhara, the playwright gives vent to the distress of his own mind—

सूत्रधार— .... क्या सारे संसार के लोग सुखी रहें और हम लोगों का परमबंधु,

1 Braj Ratna Das; Bharatendu Nataksvali, Vol.II, Introduction page 24.
2. Braj Ratna Das: Hindi Natya Sahitya, page 64.

पिता-मित्र-पुत्र सब भावनाओं से भावित, प्रेम की एकमात्र मूर्त्ति, सत्य का एकमात्र आश्रय, सौजन्य का एकमात्र पात्र, भारत का एकमात्र हित, हिन्दी का एकमात्र जनक, नाटकों का एकमात्र जीवनदाता हरिश्चन्द्र ही दुःखी है। (नेत्र में जल भरकर) – हा! सज्जनशिरोमणे! कुछ चिन्ता नहीं, तेरा तो बाना है कि कितना भी दुःख हो उसे सुख ही मानना। लोभ के परित्याग के समय नाम और कीर्त्ति तक का परित्याग कर दिया है..... स्मरण रखो ये कीड़े ऐसे ही रहेंगे और तुम लोक-बहिष्कृत हो कर भी इनके सिर पर पैर रखके विहार करोगे। क्या तुम अपना वह कवित्त भूल गये – "कहैंगे सबै ही नैन नीर भरि भरि पाछे प्यारे हरिचंद की कहानी रहि जायगी।" मित्र मैं जानता हूं कि तुम पर सब आक्षेप व्यर्थ है etc. etc.

While the first part of this speech sounds as selfpraise, the latter part gives sharp inklings into ~~the~~ author's family life and his disregard and disinheritance by his kinsmen.[1]

There is not one compact plot in this play, which contains four different pictures of the persons and places of Kashi in four different scenes. As the author has portrayed a realistic picture of Kashi in a very interesting and impressive manner, Prem Jogini can be considered as the first play which betrays a realistic tendency in Hindi drama. The merits of this fragment of play anticipate that the work, if completed, would have been no mean enterprise of Bharatendu.

'Nil Devi' (1880) is the only historical play written by Bharatendu. In brief the plot is as follows: Abdul Sharif Khan defeats Surya Dev, a Kshatriya prince, arrests him and puts him to death. Nil Devi, the wife of the defeated prince, penetrates into enemy's camp in the guise of a dancing girl to recover her husband's body and to take revenge. The Muslim chief is infatuated by her art and beauty, and while he is in a state of intoxication, Nil Devi puts him to death, thereby saving her honour and wreaking vengeance on her foe.

In Hindi literature 'Nil Devi' is the earliest attempt at historical drama, and as such it is admirable; besides it is the second Hindi drama with a tragic ending, the first tragic drama being the 'Randhir Aur Prem Mohini' of Shri Niwas Das written in 1877.

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1. Braj Ratna Das; Bharatendu Natakavali, Vol.I Introduction pages 56-57.

The comic has been successfully blended with the heroic and the pathetic sentiments. Besides the characters of Surya Dev and Abdul Sharif, the character of Nil Devi has also been nicely delineated and can inspire the Indian women with a spirit of boldness and heroism. The play is specially meant for the Indian ladies, as Bharatendu has summed up his aim in writing this play in the following words-

"इससे यह शंका किसी को न हो कि मैं स्वप्न में भी यह इच्छा करता हूं कि इन गौरांगी युवती समूह की भांति हमारी कुललक्ष्मी भी लज्जा को तिलांजलि देकर अपने पति के साथ घूमें; किन्तु और बातों में जिस भांति अंग्रेज स्त्रियां सावधान होती हैं, पढ़ी लिखी होती हैं, घर का काम काज संभालती हैं, अपने संतानगण को शिक्षा देती हैं, अपना स्वत्व पहचानती हैं, अपनी जाति और अपने देश की सम्पत्ति विपत्ति को समझती हैं, उसमें सहायता देती हैं, और इतने समुन्नत मनुष्यजीवन को व्यर्थ गृहदास्य और कलह ही में नहीं खोतीं, उसी भांति हमारी गृहदेवता भी वर्तमान हीनावस्था को उल्लंघन करके कुछ उन्नति प्राप्त करें, यही लालसा है।[1]

With this purpose in view of the author has made the plot of 'Nil Devi' more interesting and useful by introducing the scheme of queen's revenge. When Nil Devi applies fraud, in order to wreak vengeance on her deceitful enemy, and uses the same instrument of treachery against her enemy which had been used by him against her husband, she not only saves her honour and penalises the enemy, but also, in a way, exhorts Indian women to wield the arms and tact in order to deal properly with the enemies of their motherland. The play elevates the ideal of womanhood, and teaches the weaker sex how to work with the pluck of a selfrespecting and revengeful lady.

Farces & Satire of Bharatendu.

Now we are left with the farces of Bharatendu. In 1873, Bharatendu wrote his first farce 'Vaidiki Himsa Himsa na Bhavati', which is obviously the first farce of Hindi literature. In this play the author has shown how people indulge in meat-eatings, drinking and other kinds of evils and try to defend them with the authority of the scriptures. Throughout, the play has been interspersed with Sanskrit quotations, mostly from scriptures and Tantras, which have been interpreted by interested persons in favour of meat-eating, drinking and adultery etc.

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1. Introduction to the play.

In 1875-76 Bharatendu wrote his next satire, namely 'Vishasy -Visham Aushadham'. In 1875 Malhar Rao, the Gaekwar ruler of Baroda was deposed for his inefficient rule and Sayaji Rao was installed in his place. This incident served as the theme of this play, in which the author has drawn a contrast between the government of petty states and the efficient Central government of the British in India. The playwright rejoices over the dismissal of the misgoverning chief and has eulogized English rule due to its efficiency, peace and security. This farce is a monodrama, and Bhandacharya is the only character who goes on speaking throughout the play. The play closes with the following Bharat-Vakya, which sums up the feelings of Bharatendu—

परतिय परधन देखि न नृपगन चित्त चलावें।
गाय दुध बहु देहिं, मेघ सुभ जल बरसावें॥
हरिपद में रति होइ, न दुख कोऊ कहं व्यापै।
अंग्रेजन को राज ईस इत थिर करि थापै॥
श्रुतिपंथ चलैं सज्जन सबै सुखी होहिं तजि दुष्ट-भय।
कविबानी थिर रस सों रहैं भारत की नित होइ जय॥

The next farce of Bharatendu is 'Andher Nagari' published in 1881; it has six short acts which can be treated as six scenes. The object of ridicule in this farce is a king, whose rule lacks efficient administration, where there is no discrimination between good and bad, and where all things are treated alike. The play comments on the evils of greed and avarice, and pleads the necessity of the sense of discrimination; in a humorous way the playwright has satirised several evils that were prevalent in the country at that time. But the character of the king, as depicted in this farce is not only inconsistent but also very improbable.[1]

From artistic point of view these farces are not very high; still 'Vaidiki Himsa' and 'Andher Nagari' have some merit; the humour in both these works is cultured and restrained, and the satire has adequate force and sharpness. And since Bharatendu was the first playwright, who introduced farce in Hindi drama, his attempts are commendable and his lead is encouraging in this side.

1. Dr. Indar Nath Madan: Modern Hindi Literature, page 96.

In 1875-76 [illegible], namely 'Vi[illegible]
-vishnu [illegible]'. In 1875 [illegible], the [illegible] ruler of Baroda
was deposed for his [illegible] rule and [illegible] was installed in
his place. [illegible] the theme of this play, in which
the author has drawn a [illegible] between the government of petty
states and the efficient [illegible] government of the British in In[illegible]
The playwright [illegible] over the [illegible] of the [illegible]
and has eulogised British rule for its efficiency, peace and
security. [illegible]
[illegible] the play. The play e[illegible]
with the following [illegible], which sums up the feelings of the
[illegible]:-

[illegible]

The next [illegible] is 'Andher Nagri' [illegible]
in 1881; [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
good and bad, [illegible]. The play
[illegible]
of the [illegible]
[illegible]
that time. [illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]

Art and Technique of Bharatendu.

There is much truth in the rule that in order to be a good playwright, one must be a successful actor, or failing that, must be fully conversant with the rules of dramaturgy. How can one rightly understand the needs, limitations and difficulties of the stage without being an actor or director himself ? The example of Bharatendu greatly amplifies this statement; Bharatendu was himself a first-rate actor, and he participated[1] in the performance of his plays with zeal and interest, and also personally directed them. As a result of all this we find that his plays are mostly possessed of the merit of being successfully represented on the stage.

No doubt it is true to a certain extent that Bharatendu's plays are not the best pieces of art; they lack the touch of a Kalidasa or a Shakespeare. But we have also to remember that even today, almost a century after that reputed writer, we find very few plays of the genius of Shakespeare or Kalidasa in Hindi literature. Besides other reasons, the lack of a standard Hindi stage is also responsible for the dearth of quality plays in Hindi. Moreover, English and Sanskrit were the court languages of their respective countries at the time when Shakespeare and Kalidasa arose; that prestige has not become the honour of Hindi so far; but when in a few years it totally replaces English and begins to hold the same position and prestige as did English and Sanskrit in the days of Shakespeare and Kalidasa, then we can certainly hope for many plays of outstanding worth in Hindi also.

Moreover, Bharatendu had to work under so many handicaps; he had no precedents before him which he could improve upon. His path was practically untrodden so far; and he was the first scholar to make the way and set foot on it. It is more difficult to create than to criticise or to improve upon. The task before Bharatendu was not only to lay the foundations of Hindi drama, but also to set a standard of the same; he, therefore, produced different types of original plays (e,g. mythological, historical, social, political and

1. Dr. Som Nath Gupta; Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas, page 63.

farces etc.) as models for his contemporaries and successors; besides he enriched Hindi drama by translating several plays from other langu -ages. In order to infuse life in Hindi drama, he used to take active part in the performance of his plays also.

Bharatendu was aware of the vulgar and uncultured taste of the people of his times, who revelled in the performances of plays like 'Indar Sabha'. Once he went to a Parsi theatre where the 'Shakuntala' was to be staged that night; but the performance, though presumably based on the immortal play of Kalidasa, was so poor in dramatic art and refinement[1] that his heart was filled with disgust; so he decided to revive the tradition of literary drama in Hindi. With this end in view he studied classical treatises on dramaturgy; but it was not blindly that he followed the canons of classical drama; while he borrowed all classical element that was useful and interesting for his own times, at the same time he made a considerable use of the influence of contemporary trends and traditions. In fact he made the classical canons the basis of his dramatic art and then introduced an appropriate proportion of Western element too, as we find from a careful study of his plays. In this way we find that in many of his plays (e.g. 'Satya-Harish-Chandra', 'Shri Chandravali', 'Prem Jogini' etc.) the Nandi and the Prastavana have been given in the fashion of classical plays, while in others (e.g. 'Nil Devi', 'Bharat Durdasha' 'Sati Pratap' 'Andher Nagari' etc.) the Prastavana has not been given but Nandi is found in some form or the other. The Bharat Vakya, a typically classical feature, is also present in some of his plays (e.g. 'Bharat Janani', 'Satya-Harishchandra', 'Shri Chandravali' etc.) while in others (e.g. 'Nil Devi', 'Bharat Durdasha' 'Andher Nagari') it has not been given. Again, as Sanskrit drama does not divide acts into scenes (in the modern sense of the word) some plays of Bharatendu also follow the same practice (e.g. Satya Harishchandra 'Shri Chandravali', Bharat-Durdasha' etc.) but in 'Prem Jogini' the act has been divided into scenes. Further, certain scenes and actions like kissing, embracing, death, murder, battle, bathing etc. are prohibited for the stage in Sanskrit drama. Bharatendu has observed this rule to a great extent, but on a few occasions he has violated these tabooes, as for example the scenes of

1. Natak : Bharatendu Natakavali edited by Braj Ratna Das Vol.II page 480-481.

murder of Abdul Sharif (in 'Nil Devi') is shown on the stage and the dead body of Rohit (in 'Saty-Harish Chandra') is also brought before the audience on the stage.

In this way we find that while classical influence is predominant in Bharatendu's plays, Western influence is also visible in them in a certain degree. Besides this combination of the classical and the Western techniques, the influence of 'Ras Lila' is obvious in 'Shri Chandravali', and that of 'Nautankis' in 'Nil Devi'.[1]

Plot :- According to classical rules of drmaturgy there are three chief elements in drama, namely the plot, the hero (or broadly speakings, characterisation of leading dramatis personae) and the sentiment.[2] And Bharatendu, inspite of his obedience to classical canons, has given a strong evidence of his creative power in these matters. Regarding plot we find that in most of the Sanskrit dramas (e.g.'Shakuntala', 'Uttara-rama-Charita' 'Mahaviracharita', 'Mudra-rakshasa', 'Svapna-Vasava-datta', 'Veni-Sambara' etc.) the playwrights have adopted the प्रख्यात plot, although a few examples of the उत्पाद्य (invented) plot are also available (e.g. 'Mricchakatikam'; 'Charuda-ttam' etc.). Further, Sanskrit drama does not exhibit a rich variety of plot, which often centres round kings or other big persons. Bharatendu, on the other hand, has introduced different kinds of plot in his plays. With the exception of one or two plays (e.g. Satya-Harish-chandra', 'Sati Pratap' etc., in which the प्रख्यात plot has been dwelt upon) his plot is generally based on his imagination. In fact Bharatendu has given a wide scope to his power of imagination in selecting the themes of his plays. Not only has he stepped out of the restricted sphere of the traditional rules regarding plot, he has also gone a long way off from the so-called Hindi plays that were written before him. As we have shown in Chapter III the plot of these plays (that preceeded Bharatendu's works) was mostly religious or mythological; but in Bharatendu's case only three of his plays ('Satya Harishchandra', 'Sati- Pratap' and 'Shri Chandravali') follow that line. In addition to these he wrote plays on historical subjects (e.g. 'Nil

1. Dr. L.S. Varshney: Adhunik Hindi Sahitya, page 232.
2. वस्तु नेता रसस्तेषां भेदकः।

Devi), on contemporary social topics (e.g. 'Prem-Jogini') on political subjects (e.g. 'Bharat-Durdasha', 'Bharat Janani') and also wrote farces employing the instrument of satire in them for the first time. In this way he paved the way for his contemporaries and successors by putting before them a rich variety of plot, instead of sticking to its limited scope according to classical practice.

Characterisation: Not only has Bharatendu widened the scope of plot in his plays, even in the selection and delineation of his characters he has taken a broad view. Classical drama mostly aims at making its hero an ideal figure, possessed of numerous qualities of person and character, as is clear from the following definition—

नेता विनीतो मधुरस्त्यागी दक्षः प्रियंवदः।
रक्तलोकः शुचिर्वाग्मी रूढवंशः स्थिरो युवा॥
बुद्ध्युत्साहस्मृतिप्रज्ञाकलामानसमन्वितः।
शूरो दृढश्च तेजस्वी शास्त्रचक्षुश्च धार्मिकः॥

Besides being a man of great virtues and qualities, the hero was to be of high pedigree and of a high social standard; therefore in most of the famous Sanskrit plays (e.g. 'Shakuntala', 'Malvi-Kagnimitra', 'Viramorvashiya', 'Uttara-ram-Charita', 'Mudra-Rakshasa', 'Veni-Samhara' etc.) we find a repetition of the characters of one and the same class; there we mostly find kings, their courtiers and attendants their queens and princesses, their priests and clowns etc. Quite against this practice of classical drama, Bharatendu has selected his dramatis personae from different spheres of life; besides kings and other high-born characters we meet ordinary persons of ever-day life, possessed of the common vices and virtues of the world (e.g. in 'Prem Jogini' and 'Vaidiki Himsa' etc.). Even in the selection of kings Bharatendu has not restricted himself to the ideal personalities alone; while there are righteous and truthful kings like Harishchandra, there are ignoble and voluptuous nobles like Abdul Sharif and foolish princes like the one of 'Andher Nagari'. In this way Bharatendu's selection of characters is realistic in spite of some influence of idealism on it.

But while Bharatendu's delineation of the ordinary characters of his plays is very realistic, his delineation of the eminent

characters is idealistic. For instance, in 'Satya Harishchandra', the hero stands as an unflinching ideal of truth and righteousness as he himself says— 'चन्द टरै सूरज टरै, टरै जगत व्यौहार।
पै दृढ़ श्री हरिचंद को, टरै न सत्य विचार॥ (Act II)

Successive trials and ordeals fail to lower the morale of the king and through the most trying ordeals he comes out triumphant yet unarrogating. In sharp contrast to Harishchandra, Vishvamitra stands as a gigantic figure of wrath, pride and jealousy. Shaivya again remains an ideal of a faithful wife, unflinching and loving her lord through thick and thin. She endorses the righteous policy of her lord, and stands by him in honouring his words although it involves her in a series of troubles and tribulations. Most affectionate though she is towards her son (See Act IV), she utters no word of complaint against her husband even when her beloved son, the solace of her life is gone.

The heroine of 'Shri Chandravali' is again idealistic in her selfless love and devotion; she would like herself to perish in the pangs of separation, but prays to the almighty that her beloved, Shri Krishna, should not suffer similar pangs-
चन्द्रावली— (लम्बी सांस लेकर) सखी! मैं जब आरसी में अपना मुंह देखती हूं और अपना रंग पीला पाती थी तब भगवान से हाथ जोड़कर मनाती थी कि भगवान, मैं उस निर्दयी को चाहूं पर वह मुझे न चाहे।" (Act I)
This is the height of true love, which is only another name for self-sacrifice. In 'Nil Devi' while the character of Nil Devi is realistic, as she believes in applying fraud against fraud and paying back a person in his own coin, her husband Surya Dev is inspired by idealistic emotions, when he says-
सूर्य॰— हे व्याती, वे अधर्म से लड़ें, पर हम तो अधर्म नहीं कर सकते। हम आर्यवंशी लोग धर्म छोड़कर लड़ना क्या जानें। etc. etc. (Scene III)

In this way we find that while Bharatendu's characterisation is realistic to some extent, at the same time some of his chief characters aim more at the ideal than at the real as we have shown above. This tendency of idealism in characterisation is due to the influence of Sanskrit drama on Bharatendu. The characterisation and the atmosphere of Sanskrit drama is mostly idealistic[1] and Bharatendu, we know, has been greatly influenced by classical drama. The

1. Keith: Sanskrit Drama, page 278 to 282.

proper tendency of Realism in Hindi drama rose much later,[1] in the second quarter of the twentieth century.

Sentiment:- Although the three chief elements in drama, according to classical theory were the plot, charcterisation and sentiment, still, greater attention was paid to sentiment than to the other two.[2] In fact the playwright often moulded the plot and the characters so as to achieve unity and effective conduct of the sentiment, which was foremost in playwright's mind.[3] But unlike classical drama, Bharatendu has not been very scruplous about sentiment, its unity or dominance in his plays. In Sanskrit literature, drama is regarded as a type of Kavya (दृश्य-काव्य) and its significance, therefore being more from the poetic point of view, concentration was laid on sentiment. But since Bharatendu's plays are possessed of the merit of being successfully represented on the stage, scruplous attention has not been paid to the sentiment; nor do his plays mostly observe the classical rule of one dominating sentiment in one play. Often Bharatendu has acheived due success in his expression of various sentiments (रसs). For instance the following description by Chandravali of her state of mind in separation from her lord is very emotional and impressive—

चन्द्रावली — नहीं सखी, ऊपर से दुखी नहीं रहती पर मेरा जी जानता है जैसी रातें बीतती हैं —

मनमोहन ते बिछुरी जब सों
तन आंसुन सो सदा धोवती हैं।
'हरिचंद' जू प्रेम के फंद परी
कुल की कुल लाजहि खोवती हैं॥
दुख के दिन कों कोउ भांति बितै
बिरहागम रैन संजोवती हैं।
हमहीं अपुनी दशा जानैं सखी,
निसि सोवती हैं किधौं रोवती हैं॥ (Act I)

Again, the touching speeches of Shaiya on the death of Rohit (Act IV of 'Satya-Harishchandra') deeply fill one's heart with the pathetic sentiment. The fearful sentiment (भयानक रस) has been rightly produced by drawing the following scene of the cemetry

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1. See Chapter XXI below.
2. Keith: Sanskrit Drama; pages 276 to 280.
3. Ibid.

हरिश्चन्द्र— .... वर्षा से नदी का भयंकर प्रवाह, सांझ होने से श्मशान के पीपल पर कौओं का एक संग अमंगल शब्द से काँव-काँव करना और रात के आगमन से सन्नाटे का समय चित्त में कैसी उदासी और भय उत्पन्न करता है। अंधकार बढ़ता ही जाता है। वर्षा के कारण इन श्मशानवासी मंडूकों का टर्र-टर्र करना भी कैसा डरावना मालूम होता है।

रुरुआ चहुं दिसि ररत डरत सुनि के नर-नारी।
फटफटाई दोउ पंख उलूकहु रटत पुकारी॥
अंधकारवस गिरत काक अरु चील करत रव।
गिद्ध-गरुड़-गड़गिद्ध भजत लखि निकट भयद रव॥
रोअत सियार, गरजत नदी, स्वान भूंकि डरपावहीं।
संग दादुर झींगुर रुदन-धुनि मिलि स्वर तुमुल मचावहीं॥

(Satya Harishchandra Act IV)

This fearful (भयानक) description quickly turns into बीभत्स, and in the following we find an appropriate picture of the बीभत्स रस, "इस समय ये चिता भी कैसी भयंकर मालूम पड़ती है। किसी का सिर चिता से नीचे लटक रहा है, कहीं आंच से हाथ पैर जलकर गिर पड़े हैं, कहीं शरीर आधा जला है, कहीं बिल्कुल कच्चा है...... किसी का मुंह जल जाने से दांत निकला हुआ भयंकर हो रहा है।" (Act IV)

Appropriate examples of other sentiments can also be found in Bharatendu's plays. Humour is also quite abundant in his plays, and besides 'Andher Nagari' and 'Vaidiki Himsa' where the humorous is predominant, humorous touches are available in other plays also like 'Nil Devi' 'Prem Jogini', 'Bharat Durdasha' etc.

<u>Dialogue</u>: Regarding dialogue also we find that Bharatendu has mostly made it the real and commonplace talk of everyday life and not bombastic and rhetorical, heavy with numerous figures of speech. Bharatendu's characters generally talk in a simple, straight-forward manner which has made their conversation lively and swift and not dull or overserious. For example, the conversation between Indra and Narada in the first act of 'Satya Harischandra', of Chandravali and Lalita in the first act of 'Shri Chandravali', and of different characters in the first scene of 'Prem Jogini' are possessed of the qualities of force, swiftness and clarity. At the same time, in certain cases, Bharatendu's dialogue is very lengthy and even undramatic; for instance, Chandravali's soliloquy in the Vishkambhaka before the first act (of that very play), Shaivya's lamentations over the death of her son (Act IV of 'Satya Harishchandra) Harischandra's separation in Act II (of 'Shri Chandravali'), Dev's soliloquy in

soliloquies in the beginning of Act III cannot justify their length and spoil the dramatic effect.

Not only are the soliloquies of various actors so lengthy, even in course of regular conversation between two or more persons, lengthy speeches have been occasinnally introduced; for instance, the speech of Sudhakar in Scene III of Prem Jogini runs over to eight pages; while this lengthy description of Kashi is very vivid and picturesque, it is least commendable from dramatic point of view.

<u>Language</u>:- As in technique, so in the use of language also Bharatendu has adopted a middle course. Prior to him, while on the one hand Raja Lakshman Sinh was strongly in favour of Sankritised Hindi with entire absence of Perso-Arabic words,[1] Raja Shiv Prasad on the other hand advocated the use of such Hindi as was merely Urdue[2] written in Dev Nagari script. Bharatendu wisely introduced a via media, and we find in his plays that while hard Perso-Arabic words have been carefully avoided, simple and current Urdu words have been occasionally used. In the same way difficult and high sounding Sanskrit words, which are beyond the grasp of the common man have been mostly eschewed. On many occasions simple words and short sentences, dripping with emotion, reach the very depth of the reader's mind; for instance, in the following laments of Shaivya,

"हाय बेटा! अरे आज मुझे किसने लूट लिया। हाय, मेरी बोलती हुई चिड़िया कहाँ उड़ गई। हाय, अब मैं किसका मुख देखके जीऊंगी। हाय, मेरी अंधी की लकड़ी कौन छीन ले गया! हाय, मेरा ऐसा सुन्दर खिलौना किसने तोड़ डाला। etc etc."

We find that short sentences couched in natural and simple words strongly arouse the feeling of sympathy in the hearts of the audience. while pathos flows freely from these simple words, bombastic and difficult words would have spoiled the effect. In the same way extracts quoted above in illustration of various sentiments are also strong proof of Bharatendu's command over language and his skill in its appropriate use.

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1. Ram Chandra Shukla; Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihas; Punjab edition pages 366 to 373.
2. Ibid.

Bharatendu has made a liberal use of verse also in his plays. This use of verse in Bharatendu is the result of the influence of classical drama as well as contemporary Parsi theatrical plays; while in most of the cases Bharatendu's verses are very significant[1] and appropriate, and enhance the beauty and force of the description like classical drama, in certain cases these verses are unnecessary and useless and seem to have been added in imitation of the Parsi theatrical tendency.[2] The language of the verse is Braj Bhasha, but it is not very hard or distorted and is marked by clarity and polish.

Songs :- In addition to a free use of verse, Bharatendu has inserted several songs in his plays, many of which are very beautiful and full of emotion; they add force and charm to the situation and relieve monotony and dullness that might arise from continuity of action. We can take, for example the following song of Devi Sinh in the fifth scene of 'Nil Devi' -

प्यारी बिन कटत न कारी रैन।
पल छिन न परत जिय हाय चैन॥
तन पीर बढ़ी सब छुट्यो धीर,
कहि आवत नाहिं कछु मुखहु बैन॥
जिय तड़फड़ात सब जरत गात,
टप टप टपकत दुख भरे नैन॥
परदेस परे तजि देस हाय,
दुख मेटनहारो कोउ है न। etc. etc.

In addition to its melody this song nicely betrays the emotions latent in Devi Sinh's mind, who, no doubt gone to foreign land, is still tenderly reminded of his loving wife at night; it shows that even a violent soldier has a soft corner in his heart. Again the opening song of 'Bharat Durdasha' (रोवहु सब मिलिकै आवहु भारत भाई etc.) not only gives an idea of author's grief on the deplorable condition of his country, but also hints at the aims and events of the play.

Conception of Love: Love is a very comprehensive term, which includes all types of affection, passion, patriotism and divine devotion. Bharatendu's life was inspired with two kinds of love: (1) Love of God or virtue; and (2) Love of the country i.e. patriotism.

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1. For example, see verses quoted above from 'Shri Chandravali' and 'Satya-Harischandra'. Examples can be multiplied.
2. For example, see verse portion in the second ~~act~~ scene of 'Prem Jogini'.

In his plays we find this spirit of love distilled in one form or the other; purely sensual love is not expressed in his dramas. While in 'Shri Chandravali' the love of God is predominant, and in 'Satya-Harishchandra' that of ~~the~~ truthfulness, in 'Bharat-Durdasha' 'Nil-Devi' and 'Bharat Janani' Bharatendu has given vent to his feelings of patriotism.

For instance in 'Shri Chandravali' Shuk Dev says-

"जो परमप्रेम अमृतमय एकान्त भक्ति है, जिसके उदय होते ही अनेक प्रकार के आग्रह-स्वरूप ज्ञान-विज्ञानादि अंधकार नाश हो जाते हैं और जिसके चित्त में आते ही संसार का निगड़ आपसे आप खुल जाता है — वह किसी को नहीं मिली"......"इनका (ब्रज की गोपियों का) कैसा विलक्षण प्रेम है कि अकथनीय और अकरणीय है। क्योंकि जहां माहात्म्य-ज्ञान होता है वहां प्रेम नहीं होता और जहां पूर्ण प्रीति होती है वहां माहात्म्य-ज्ञान नहीं होता। ये धन्य हैं कि इनमें दोनों बातें एकसंग मिलती हैं।"

(Vishkambhak before Act I)

Bharatendu's feelings of patriotism have been manifested in a very forceful manner in 'Bharat-Durdasha' and 'Bharat-Janani'. The contrast between the glorious past and the present ruined state of his motherland cuts him to the quick; he is verily smitten with grief when he says— "हाय! यह वही भूमि है जहां साक्षात् भगवान श्रीकृष्णचन्द्र के दूतत्व करने पर भी वीरोत्तम दुर्योधन ने कहा था 'सूच्यग्रं नैव दास्यामि बिना युद्धेन केशव' और आज हम उसी भूमि को देखते हैं कि श्मशान हो रही है। अरे, यहां की योग्यता, विद्या, सभ्यता, उद्योग, उदारता, धन, बल, मान, दृढ़चित्तता, सत्य सब कहां गये।" (Act II)

In powerful words the author delineates the glorious picture of ancient India:— "हाय, यह वही भारत है जो किसी समय सारी पृथ्वी का शिरोमणि गिना जाता था?

भारत के भुजबल जग रच्छित।
भारत विद्या लहि जग सिच्छित॥
भारत तेज जगत विस्तारा।
भारत भय कंपत संसारा॥
जाके तनिकहिं भौंह हिलाए।
थर थर कंपत नृप डरपाए॥
भारत किरिन जगत उजियारा।
भारत जीव जिअत संसारा॥ etc.
(Act VI)

In the end the author gets desperate and suggests the following—

तुममें जल नाहिं जमुना गंगा।
बढ़हु बेग करि तरल तरंगा॥
धोवहु यह कलंक की रासी।
बोरहु किन झट मथुरा कासी॥
अहो भयानक भ्राता सागर।
तुम तरंग-निधि अति बल-आगर॥
बढ़हुं न बेगि धाई क्यों भाई।
देहु भारत भुव तुरत डुबाई॥ (Act VI)

Loyalty to the Crown:

On the whole Bharatendu has praised British rule in India; especially in the Bharat Vakya to 'Vishasy Visham Aushadham' his following words sound as clear praise of English rule:--

अंग्रेजन को राज ईस इत थिर करि थापे॥

But we must remember that nowhere does Bharatendu show himself off as a man of the British government, or a traitor to the cause of his own country. Firstly, he finds the British rule, which brought peace and security to the people decidedly better than the type of government that was going on in India before their occupation; secondly, in eulogizing British rule Bharatendu is in fact inspired by the golden Ram Rajya, and he addresses the British Queen as आर्येश्वरी, माता etc. and prince of Wales as आर्येश्वर etc. At the same time the author has also raised a strong note of revolt against the evils of British rule, such as racial discrimination, maltreatment of the Indian by the English etc. While he praises English rule and says अंग्रेजन को राज ईस इत थिर करि थापे, at the same time he is very much grieved to see that Indian wealth is reaching foreign lands and alien pockets under British rule:

अंग्रेज राज सुख साज सजे सब भारी।
पै धन बिदेस चलि जात इहै अति ख्वारी। etc. (भारतदुर्दशा-Act I)

So while the playwright has praised English rule for its boons and blessings, he has also criticised it for its curses and evils.

Natural Description:- In Sanskrit literature, especially in the works of Kalidasa (and even Bhavabhuti) Nature occupies a very prominent place. Natural descriptions of every kind— lovely and romantic (e.g. in Kalidasa) dreadful and awe-inspiring (e.g. in the

second act of 'Uttara-rama-Charita') are abundant in Sanskrit works. This tendency of natural descriptions gradually diminished as time went on, and from the eighth or ninth century onwards, natural descriptions began to be scarce and artificial in Sanskrit literature. Perhaps the chief cause for this decline was that while the earlier classical poets, in spite of some of them being proteges of various kings, loved to see and appreciate the genuine beauty and romance of Nature at large, the later poets lacked to realise the vital importance and advantage of Nature in a poet's life; and they, living mostly in cities, could get inspiration from artificial objects like the gardens and parks of the cities and not from Nature at large.

Bharatendu also has paid very little attention to real Nature In a splendid manner he may describe the natural objects that he may meet in or about the cities; even when he portrays a word-picture of Ganga in the third act of 'Satya-Harischandra', it is not the pure, clean and cooling Ganga flowing zigzag in some lofty range of mountains, or in some enchanting sylvan land, but the artificial and city Ganga as it flows under the bathing ghats at Kashi, where hundred thousands of men and women take their plunge with a belief of washing off their sins—

नव उज्ज्वल जलधार, हार हीरक सी सोहति।
बिच-बिच छहरति बूंद मध्य मुक्ता-मनि पोहति॥
लोल लहर लहि पवन एक पै इक इमि आवत।
जिमि नर-गन-मन विविध मनोरथ करत मिटावत॥
कहुं सुन्दरी नहात नीर कर-जुगल उछारत।
जुग अंबुज मिलि मुक्त गुच्छ मनु सुच्छ निकारत॥
सुन्दरि-ससि-मुख नीर मध्य इमि सुन्दर सोहत।
कमल बेलि लहलही नवल कुसुम मन मोहत॥ etc.

(Satya-Harishchandra, Act III).

Still, there are a few occasions where Bharatendu has touched real Nature; e.g.

कूजत कहुँ कलहंस कहूँ मज्जत पारावत।
कहुँ कारंडव उड़त कहूँ जलकुक्कुट धावत॥
चक्रवाक कहुँ बसत कहूं बक ध्यान लगावत।
सुक पिक जल कहुँ पियत कहूँ भ्रमरावलि गावत॥
कहुँ तट पर नाचत मोर बहु रोर विविध पच्छी करत।
जलपान-न्हान करि सुख भरे तट सोभा सब जिय धरत॥
etc.

(Shri Chandravali Act IV)

CHAPTER V

OTHER PLAYWRIGHTS OF THE NINTEENTH CENTURY

The rise of Hindi drama, we have seen, was delayed for a long time due to various reasons stated in Chapter I. And although one or two plays[1] of merit appeared before Bharatendu, still he can be rightly called the father of regular Hindi drama. But it is encouraging to note that the lead of that illustrious writer in different types of drama was briskly followed by numerous other writers, so that once he paved the way for Hindi drama, it was soon flooded by dozens of other playwrights. The causes of this speedy development, as of the rise, of Hindi drama are not far to seek, and they have been pointed out in Chapter III.

Shri Niwas Das.

Of the numerous followers of Bharatendu, the minor ones we shall take up a little later. Among the leading playwrights of this period L. Shri Niwas Das deserves the first mention. He was a promis-ing young man, much interested in the study and service of Hindi[2] literature. He was a close friend of Bharatendu, and like the latter Shri Niwas also died young, at the age of thirty-six; otherwise we could have expected some more and even better works of art from him.

Besides 'Pariksha-guru', which is a novel, Shri Niwas Das has written four plays. His first play 'Prahlad-Charit' has eleven scenes and deals with the popular mythological story of Prahlad. While the other three plays of the author are comparatively better, 'Prahlad-Charit' is a miserable failure; neither has the playwright suceeded in knitting the plot in an impressive manner,[3] nor has he shown any skill in his delineation of characters,[4] nor is the dialogue possessed of adequate force and power.

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1. See Chapter III above. 2. See Introduction to 'Randhir Aur Prem-Mohini'.

3. Also see Dr. Som Nath Gupta; Hindi Natak Sahitya ka Itihas, page 106

4. Also see Braj Ratna Das: Hindi-Natya-Sahitya, page 86.

His second play 'Tapta-Samvarana' (completed 1874) was first published in book form in 1883. It is a romantic drama in five acts and deals with the love-story of Tapta and Samvarana. Tapta, the daughter of the Sun, is so much lost in thoughts of her lover (Samvarana) that she does not notice the arrival of sage Gautam. In wrath the sage curses her that her lover would forget all about her; when propitiated, the sage agrees that her lover would recognize her as soon as their bodies meet each other. While roaming in state of separation Tapta accidentally meets Samvarana who is senseless; as they touch each other, the curse terminates; they recognize each other and their marriage is joyfully celebrated.

The play is named after the hero and the heroine, has a 'Prastavana' and no sub-division of acts into scenes—all in the classical fashion. The author is obviously indebted to Kalidasa, as the ideas of Gautam's curse (Act II) and Tapta's writing a letter to her lover (Act III) have been directly borrowed from the 'Shakuntala' Although 'Tapta-Samvarana' is a better attempt at drama than author's first play, still the playwright does not show great maturity in plot-construction, characterisation or dialogue.

'Ranadhir Aur Prem-Mohini' (1877) is again a romantic drama much similar to 'Romeo and Juliet' of Shakespeare. With a tragic ending and the absence of 'Prastavana', the play betrays a modern touch. It has five acts, and its theme is the love and tragic end of Ranadhir, prince of Patan and Prem-Mohini, princes of Surat. This is, perhaps, the best of all the four plays of Shri Niwas, and can also be successfully staged after minor modifications. The plot has been properly constructed, and the erotic, the heroic and the pathetic have been nicely blended together; the characters of Ranadhir, Prem-Mohini and Ripudaman have been well portrayed. The conversation is mostly conducted in language suitable to the characters, and its displays emotion, force and softness according to time and situation.[1] On certain occasions Urdu and Persian words have been unnecessarily used.[2] Some specimens of the Marwari language are also found in the play; e.g.

1. E.g. the dialogue of Ranadhir and Prem-Mohini in Act III scene 5; or between Prem-Mohini and Malati in Act III scene 1, or between Ranadhir and others in Act II scene 3 etc.
2. E.g. in the speeches of Sukhvasi Lal in Act I scene 5, Act II scene 2 etc.

नत्थू —(रोनी सूरत बनाकर) बापजी, हूं तो मारियो गयो, कुत्तारी मोत मारियो गयो। म्हारी शगरी उघराणी डूब जासी, नोकर जठारो जठै माल दबा बीमारी पैड़ी भैणा; गाठारो, लेन देन, मालतालरो धन्दो, आडतियांरो काम काज, कुण भुगतासी? etc.

(Act II, Scene 3).

Verses, generally of a proverbial nature, have been freely interspersed— सज्जन तजत न नीतिपथ, यदपि प्राण तज देत।
भूखो रहत मृगेन्द्र तउ तृण न कबहुं मुख लेत ॥ (Act V scene I)

Prem-Mohini sums up her ideal of heroism and पातिव्रतधर्म in the following words—

प्रेम० — सखी। रणधीर सिंह मेरे सर्वस्व हैं, चन्द्रमा और चांदनी की तरह मैं अपना प्राण उनके आधीन समझती हूं। परन्तु रण से विमुख होकर प्राणप्यारे फूलों की सेज पर सोवें तो इसके बदले रण में बैरी के हाथ उनका शरशय्या पर सोना मुझको अच्छा लगता है; मैं तत्काल तन तज कर प्यारे प्राणपति की सेवा में चली जाऊंगी।

(Act V Scene I)

Deeply pathetic are these words of Champa, uttered on the death of the hero and the heroine—

चम्पा — जैसे सूर्य चन्द्रमा के मिलन से (अमावस को) अधिक अंधेरी होती है, तैसे आज इन दोनों के मिलने से दशा हुई। ये दोनों क्या इस लायक थे? (Act V scene I)

Extremely touching are the following lines again—

सुरतपाते — ..... हाय। मेरी जन्म भर की कमाई पल भर में लुट गई! ये विवाह का सामान इनके क्रियाकर्म में काम आवेगा! मोहिनी। तू अपने दुखिया बाप से एक बात कहे बिना उसको दुःखसागर में छोड़कर कहां चली गई? etc. etc.

मालती—(चम्पा से रोकर) सखी! हमारे भाग्य में क्या दुष्ट दैव ने यही लिख दिया था कि रणधीर और प्रेममोहिनी के लिये फूलों की सेज के बदले चन्दन की चिता बनायें! (Act V scene I)

The fourth and the last play of Shri Niwas is 'Sanyogita-Svayamvar' (1885). It has again five acts, and its plot is based on the famour 'Prithvi Raj Raso' of Chand Bardai; at certain places the playwright has tempered with the established facts of history; for instance Jai Chand, in this play, himself in the end agrees to the marriage of Sanyogita and Prithvi Raj, and gives dowry etc. to his daughter. As compared with the previous play, this work appears to be very poor in dramatic art and skill.

In all his plays, except 'Ranadhir Aur Prem-Mohini' the author has given the Prastavana in classical manner. There is an abundance of 'asides' and soliloquies too are not wanting in his plays.

while the conversation is quick and lively in many cases,[1] some of the speeches are very lengthy and undramatic.[2] In language the playwright has followed a middle course, as we can see from the extracts quoted above, and has tried to banish hard Persian and Sanskrit words from his works. Again, the credit of introducing tragedy in Hindi drama rightly goes to Shri Niwas; his 'Ranadhir Aur Prem-Mohini' is the first Hindi drama with a tragic ending. Bharatendu's 'Nil Devi' which is also a tragedy appeared three years later than Shri Niwas's tragic play i.e. in 1880.

Radha Krishna Das

Radha Krishna Das was the cousin of Bharatendu, and was, like him, fired with the spirit of patriotism and service of Hindi literature. He completed 'Sati Pratap' which had been left incomplete by Bharatendu.

His first play 'Dukhini Bala' has only one act with six scenes in all. It has the 'Prastavana' and the 'Bharat-Vakya' but no Nandi. It is all in prose and strikes a strong note of revolt against child-marriage, ill-matched marriages, and the orthodox system of marriage on the basis of horo-scope etc. Partly because the playwright appears to be more careful about his aim of preaching against these evil practices of the Hindu society and partly because this is his first dramatic enterprise, important dramatic elements like those of plot-construction and characterization have not been very skilfully attended to. This play was first published in 1880, but was revised a couple of years later and a few additions and alterations were made.

His second play 'Maharani Padmavati' (1881) has six acts with ninteen scenes. It deals with the well-known story of Alauddin's siege of Chitaur in order to secure Padmavati; having failed to achieve his object by force, he applies for truce and arrests the hospitable Rana. Padmavati deals with the traitor with treachery, and with a cunning device liberates her husband from the bonds of the enemy. In a desparate fight that follows, Rajputs work havoc

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1. See foot note No. (1) on page 59.
2. E.g. Some of the speeches of सूरतपति & पाटनपति in Act V Scene I; and the opening speeches of Randhir and Ripudaman in Act II Scene 4.

While the conversation is quick and lively in many cases, some of the speeches are very lengthy and undramatic. In language the play which has followed a middle course, as we can see from the extracts quoted above, and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and Sanskrit words from his works. Again, the effect of [illegible] tragedy in Hindi-drama [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible] 'Ranadhir and Prem-mohini' is the first Hindi drama with a tragic ending. [illegible]'s '[illegible]' which is also a tragedy appeared three years later than and [illegible] [illegible] in 1880.

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] was the cousin of Bharatendu, and was, like him, filled with the spirit of patriotism and service of Hindi literature. He completed 'Sati Pratap' which had been left incomplete by Bharatendu.

His first play 'Dukhini Bala' has only one act with six scenes in all. It has the 'Prastavana' and the 'Bharat-Vakya' but no Nandi. It is all in prose and voices a strong note of revolt against child-marriage, ill-matched marriages, and the orthodox system of marriage on the basis of horo-scope etc. [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] to be [illegible] social [illegible] of [illegible] against these evil practices of the Hindu society [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] this in his first dramatic [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] like those of [illegible] and characterization have not been very skilfully attended to. This play was first published in 1880, but was revised a couple of years later and a few [illegible] [illegible] additions were made.

His second play 'Maharani Padmavati' [illegible]

with the hostile army, but as they were greatly outnumbered, the fort of Chitaur falls to the enemy. The brave Rajput women offer 'Jauhar' ceremony, and Alauddin, inspite of his victory, has to go back disillusioned and frustrated in his aims.

As compared with the previous play, this attempt shows sufficient signs of maturity; the playwright has shown adequate power of characterisation while depicting Padmavati, Alauddin and Ratna Sen. Again, in a forceful style he has succeeded in producing the inspiring atmosphere of heroism. In the introduction to this play, the author has given a short history of Mewar.

'Dharmālāp' (1885), the third play of Radha Krishna Das, is just a long conversation and has no acts or scenes. 'Sanatan Dharam' is seated in the centre, and is surrounded on all sides by Vedantists, Vaisnavas, Shaivas, Arya-Samajists, Brahmos, Theosophists and followers of various other sects. A discussion is going on about religion and in the end emphasis is laid on the unity of God, and it is asserted that all religious are only different means of approaching one and the same God. As a dramatic piece this work does not possess any notable merit.

The last and the best play of Radha Krishna Das is 'Maharana Pratap' or 'Rajasthan Kesari' (1897). It consists of a Prastavana and seven acts with thirty six scenes. It is a historical drama, but alongside the main plot of Pratap and Akbar, a sub-plot of the love and patriotism of Malati and Gulab Sinh also runs on. Although the plot is quite heavy, yet the playwright has handled it with sufficient skill. The characters of Maharana Pratap, Akbar and of Prithvi Raj and his wife have also been carefully delineated.

Pratap is the embodiment of sacrifice, chivalry and martiality; in the following words he sums up his ideal of heroism—

जबलौं तन में प्राण न तबलौं मुख को मोड़ौं।
जबलौं कर में शक्ति न तबलौं शस्त्रहिं छोड़ौं।
जबलौं जिह्वा सरस दीनवच नाहिं उच्चारौं।
जबलौं धड़ पर सीस झुकावन नाहिं विचारौं॥

(Act VII Scene 5)

Akbar's character has also been vividly depicted. He is a cunning diplomat, but at the same time he is a man of high ideals,

having due respect for the wisdom and chivalry of the enemy. A single strong rebuff from the wife of Prithvi Raj on 'Nauroz' day is sufficient to teach him to give up that misdirected evil practice of enjoying the selected beauties of his kingdom. Here is Akbar, waiting impatiently (on the Nauroz day) for the arrival of some fresh beauty—

अकबर— हाय! मैं इतना बड़ा शाहनशाह, मेरे यहां दुनिया के ऐशो-इशरत के सामान मुहय्या, मगर मेरे दिल को एकदम भी राहत नहीं, शबोरोज़ फ़िक्र, लहज़ः बलहज़ः तरद्दुदात, रोज़ नई ख़्वाहिशें, रोज़ नये हौसिले और हाय! इन गुलबदनों की चाह ने मुझे पागल बना दिया है। कितनी देर से कितने कामों का हर्ज करके बावला सा यहां घूम रहा हूं... ..... मालूम होता है, बीनसीबन हमारे गुले मुराद को लिये आ रही है। etc.

(Act II Scene 3)

It is the wife of Prithvi Raj, who is brought there by trick But as soon as Akbar tries to touch her, she bursts forth, sharply rebukes him and in the end draws out her dagger to put an end to that debauch's life. It is then that Akbar swears to give up that sensual practice for good. Quite interesting is this change in his attitude, just after a few minutes, when he begs pardon of Prithvi Raj's wife—

अकबर —(रानी से) मैं अपने गुनाहों के लिये सख़्त नादिम हुआ, मेरा कुसूर मुआफ़ करो, मेरी जां-बख़्शी करो, मैं ख़ुदा की कसम खाकर कहता हूं, मुझे मेरी उम्रे नातजुर्बाकार और दुनियावी यारों ने धोखा दिया। मैं अब तक इस पाकदामनी, इस बहादुरी, इस नेकचलनी को कभी ख़्वाब में भी न सोच सकता था।..... अब किसी के साथ ऐसा गुनाह सरज़द न होगा।

(Act II, Scene 3).

In addition to characterisation, the playwright possesses good control over language. The language—be it verse or prose—is forceful and appropriate. Muslim characters speak Urdu, sometimes using very hard Persian words, as can be judged from the two speeches of Akbar quoted above. The dialogues are often very lively and powerful. The author has given this play a happy ending, as the play does not include the scene of Rana Pratap's death.

But although this play is a definite advance over author's earlier plays, still it is not altogether free from defects. Firstly, when the very first scene of the play opens, we find Pratap and others sitting absolutely action-less on the stage because music is

going on behind the scenes for some time. It looks very awkward and rather absurd that characters should sit before the audience doing nothing, waiting for the background music to stop. It would have been better either to have brought the music to the foreground, or to have raised the curtain only when the last line of the music was going to be finished. We find more examples of such background music with characters sitting actionless on the stage in Act II, Scene 3, Act III Scene 1 and Act V Scene I. In some of these cases this music looks undramatic and absurd, but in Act II scene 3 it has become very significant and dramatic. In this scene while music is going on behind the scenes, Akbar is shown on the stage busy in thinking and moving about with agitated mind; more-over the theme of that song nicely coincides with Akbar's agitated state of mind and thus enhances the dramatic effect of the situation.

Further, the versified enlogy of Pratap's dynasty by Kaviraja in Act I Scene 1 is very lengthy, as also the letter of Prithvi Raj in Act VII Scene 5; their length would prove boring and montonous on the stage. Again, some of the speeches of Pratap[1] and Akbar[2] are also very lengthy. The abundance of soliloquies and the 'asides' is also not a commendable feature.

Another defect in this play is the sixth scene of Act V; it is very weak from dramatic viewpoint. In this scene we find 'Sakta Ji' meeting his brother (Pratap) after a long time and at a very critical juncture. It is a very high moment and their sudden meeting after longdrawn enmity should have been made more emotional and impressive. But the playwright has failed to go deep into the hearts of the two brothers; the scene therefore lacks due force and warmth of emotions. Perhaps aware of this very weakness, the author has hastily intercepted the conversation of the two brothers with Chetak's death. Here again, the laments of Pratap on Chetak's death lack that force and touching pathos which we find in Shaivya's[3] laments over the death of her son, although the horse is no less

1. E.g. Pratap's soliloquy in Act I Scene 3, his speeches in Act V scene 4, in Act VI scene 2 and in Act VII scene 3 etc.
2. E.g. Akbar's soliloquy in Act II Scene 4, and his versified speech in Act II Scene 3 etc.
3. Satya Harishchandra, Act IV.

dear to Pratap than Rohit to Shaivya. Pratap's laments here sound no more than a mere bard-like enumeration of Chetak's services, as we see here—

प्रताप-(अत्यन्त करुण स्वर में) विपति सँघाती धीर, स्वामिभक्त साँचो सुहृद।
चल्यो होइ बेपीर, रे चेतक परताप तजि॥
सहे अनेकन घाय, चढ़ि सलीम-गज-सीस पै।
पीछो दियो न पाय, अब क्यों भाजत मोहिं तजि॥
रतन अमोलक तौल, सहस गुनो जो वारिए।
तौहू लहै न मोल, रे चेतक तुव सामुहे॥
करके तहीनिया मोहि, हा हा चेतक चलि बस्यो।
सहि नाहिं सकत बिछोह, अब जीवन लागत वृथा॥

(Act V Scene 6)

One more defect may be pointed out in this play. It is only in this scene (Act V Scene 6) that 'Sakta Ji' appears on the stage for the first and the last time. The playwright seems to have forgotten him altogether after this event, so much so that even Pratap never makes a mention of 'Sakta Ji' or his services anywhere after this scene, nor even in his closing speech in Act VII scene 8.[1] Still, in spite of these defects, 'Maharana Pratap' remains the best play of this period, and after Radha Krishna Das we find such genius not earlier than in the plays of Jay Shankar Prasad.[2] This play has been successfully staged several times.

Ayodhya Sinha Upadhyay

Upadhyay is one of the leading Hindi poets; today he is known to us only as a poet, but in the beginning of his literary career he tried his hand at drama and novel also. He wrote two plays namely 'Pradyumna-Vijaya' and 'Rukmini-Parinay'.

His 'Pradyumna-Vijaya' (1893) is based on Bharatendu's translation of 'Dhananjaya-Vijaya';[3] Nikumbha, a demon threatens to imprison all the Yadavas and to carry away five hundred daughters of Brahmadatta, in case he is refused share in their sacrifice. Having received no share in the sacrifice, he flares up and by force carries

1. Dr. Som Nath Gupta: Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas, page 123, and Braj Ratna Das: Hindi Natya-Sahitya, page 105.
2. Hindi Natya Sahitya page 105.
3. See Introduction to 'Pradyumna-Vijaya'.

away those five hundred girls. At this Pradymna engages Nikumbha in a battle, defeats him and recovers those five hundred young girls.

In conformity with the classical practice the play begins with the 'Nandi' and the 'Prastavana'; verse is also quite abundant; battle-scenes have not been actually shown on the stage, but their details have been given in course of conversation. The heroic sentiment prevails, but the language has been distorted and mutilated at certain places in order to enhance the heroic effect.

Upadhyay's second play 'Rukmini-Parinay' (1894) again begins with the Nandi and the Prastavana, and has nine acts with one additional act. Rukini's marriage having been settled with Shishupala, the latter reaches her father's capital for marriage. On the other hand Rukmini, who has developed an attachment for Krishna for his great virtues invites him for marriage. In the battle that follows between the two rival bride-grooms, Krishna comes out victorious, and he takes his devoted bride to his capital in triumph. The additional act records the love-sports of Krishna and Rukmini.

Both these plays closely follow classical rules of dramaturgy as we have stated above. Although the playwright has achieved some success in plot-construction and characterisation, his dialogues are not very quick; speeches are often very lengthy and the 'asides' are too abundant; the language too is loaded with hard Tatsama words, which have been freely used both in prose and verse. These plays are not very suited to the stage and they may afford little interest to the common reader even in study.

Kishori Lal Goswami

'Mayanka Manjari' (1891) of Kishori Lal Goswami is another important play, consisting of five long acts. Its theme is romantic and centres round the love and happy marriage of Mayank , daughter of the minister of Avantipur, and Virendra Sinh, the son of the king of that place. The father of the heroine intends to marry her to Basant Dev, another prince who has already got a wife and is immoral too. Several plots are designed and obstacles of different kinds are put in the way of Mayank and Virendra; but both of them work with fortitude, wisdom and bravery, and coming over all the difficulties,

they are married in the end. Two friends of Mayank are also married to two friends of Virendra.

The play follows the classical practice when it gives the Prastavana and Bharat Vakya, does not divide its acts into scenes, and includes poetry in course of conversation. But the classical canons have not been followed strictly; firstly the play, although named as 'Maha Natak' has only five acts, and secondly the kissing of Mayank and Virendra, the death of Durjan-Bandhu etc. are scenes which are banned for the stage in classical dramaturgy. The author has written this play with the object of reform, and his reformist role can be easily detected in the speeches of some of his characters (e.g. the parents of Mayank etc.), where we in fact listen to the playwright speaking for or against any prevalent custom or practice. The erotic and the heroic sentiments are predominant in the play.

'Natya-Sambhava' (1904) is another play of Kishori Lal Goswami. In this play the author deals with the traditional theory of the origin of drama, according to which sage Bharat brought this art from heaven to earth. There is not much of plot-construction and character-isation in this drama, although there is some sign of maturity in dia-logue.

Besides these two plays, K.L. Goswami wrote 'Chaupat-Chapet', which being a farce has been discussed elsewhere.[1]

Bal Krishna Bhatta.

Bal Krishna Bhatta has written several original plays and has translated others from Bengali and Sanskrit. He translated 'Padma-vati'[2] and 'Sharmishtha'[3] of Michael Madhusudan Datta, and also translated 'Mrichhakatika'[4] from Sanskrit. He also wrote a few farces[5] like 'Kali Raj Ki Sabha', 'Rail Ka Vikat Khel' and 'Bal Vivah' etc., which satirise contemporary social and political evils.

His beautiful original play 'Damayanti-Swayamvara' was recently (August 1942) published by Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Allahabad, being edited by the playwright's son Dhananjay Bhatta. The play has ten acts, and deals with the marriage of Nala and Damayanti. It has the

1. See Chapter VI below. 2. See Chapter VI under Translations.
3. Ibid 4. Ibid. 5. See Chapter VI below.

Nandi and the Prastavana in the classical way. The language of the play testifies to the author's great control over it, and the dialogues too are often very lively and poetical.

In 1947 Nagari Pracharini Sabha (Kashi) published 'Bhatia-Natakavali' which consits of three plays, namely 'Vrihannala', 'Venu-Samhar' and 'Jaisa Kam Vaisa Parinam'. Of these, 'Brihannala' deals with the account of battle between the mighty army of the Kauravas on one side and Arjun disguised as Brihannala on the other. The play begins immediately after the benedictory verse and has no 'Prastavana'; it has four acts which have been further sub-divided into scenes. It has several 'asides' and soliloquies, and some of the speeches are quite lengthy.[1] But, in this play also, the author displays sufficient control over language, which he uses according to situation and charac -ter; for instance, here we listen to Draupadi (disguised as Sairandh-ri) sorrowing over her plight as a maid-servant —

सैरन्ध्री – हा! एक वह समय था जब कि हम भी ऐसे ही पिता पाञ्चालराज के घर में रह कर राजनन्दिनी कहलाती थीं। अहा! वह समय कैसा अनिर्वचनीय सुख का दाता था। हाय! वे दिन अब क्या फिर आ सकते हैं! .... यह हमारे ही दुर्भाग्य का फल है जो आर्यपुत्र पाण्डव भी दुःख भोगते हैं। (Act II Scene 2).

Again, when in the last scene the Pandavas disclose their identity, the Raja of Virat takes them to be usurpers, and getting extremely wrathful he draws out his sword to kill Yudhishthira whom he finds seated on his throne —

विराट – (तलवार निकाल कर) रे पिशाच कंक, तेरे प्रतिपालन का अन्त में हमें यही फल मिला। हाय! हमने विषवृक्ष का आरोपण किया। कालसर्प को दूध पिलाया। रे पामर नीच, तेरे योग्य यह सिंहासन है! (Act IV Scene 1)

'Venu-Samhar' is another short play of Bhatia; it has the Nandi in Sanskrit, the Prastavana and three acts in mixed prose and verse. Sanskrit shlokas have also been occasionally introduced. The play is based on a Puranic story of King Venu, who invites his down-fall and death by his tyrannical rule and his disrespect of the Brahmanas and the sages. In this play the author has not devoted himself to characterisation, so much so that we meet Venu, the hero of the play for the first and the last time in the last Scene of the

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1. E.g. Ashvatthama's speech in Act I, Scene 3; Brahaman's soliloquy in Act II, Scene 1, Sairindhri's soliloquy in Act II, Scene 2, Bishma's speech in Act II Scene 3 etc.

drama. It seems that the playwright aims at drawing a picture of contemporary India suffering under the British rule by referring to the tyrannical rule of Venu. Like his previous play, this drama also abounds in 'asides' and long soliloquies.[1]

Although the plot of this play deals with the pre-Mahabharat period,[2] yet the author has unscrupulously used Urdu and English words in course of his speeches; e.g.

तरुणी - ....यहांतक तो है कि सभ्यता की इस नई चलन में बेटा बाप को मूर्ख और गंवार कहता है So wise we are born we call our fathers fools इसके आगे आप जानते ही होंगे ।......परदा-परदा चिल्लाने वालों से कहो बैठे बैठे सिर धुनें उन्हें क्या मालूम कि यह सभ्यता और आज़ादगी का ज़माना है और आने वाला है ।

ज़माना आ लगा आज़ादगी का,
चहो सो कर लो भैय्या अपने जी का ।
....
करें भोजन मज़े से होटलों में,
मज़ा चख ले बेराण्डी और टी का ।
मटन बिसकुट और ह्विस्की भी उड़ायें,
नहीं इसमें इजारा है किसी का ।
जो डूबे नाम पुरखों का तो डूबे,
भला क्या ज़िक्र है नेकी बदी का । etc.etc. (Act I, Scene 2).

This use of English and Urdu words may suit in a farce like 'Jaisa Kam Vaisa Parinam'[3] but it is certainly anachronistic here. Moreover the atmosphere of the above extract is certainly not that of pre-Mahabharat days; it obviously depicts the picture of contemporary society.

Minor Playwrights.

In addition to these leading playwright (discussed above) who were inspired with Bharatendu's ideals of art and dramatic skill, there were numerous other playwrights who were either possessed of lesser literary or artistic skill, or who were not so scruplous about reformation in the art of drama, and who, while writing literary plays,

1. E.g. the announcement in Act I Scene 1; Taruni's soliloquy in Act I Scene 2; Conversation of two hermit-boys in Act I Scene 3; Kukkatamishra's soliloquy in Act II Scene 3; Vriddhashrava's soliloquy in Act III Scene I etc.
2. See introduction (कथा-प्रसंग) to the play.
3. Discussed in Chapter VI below.

to some extent also kept in view of the aim of entertaining the public. Although the number of these lesser playwrights is very large, yet we shall consider only some important plays of this group.

First of all we take up Badri Narayan Chaudhri 'Premghan'. He was a contemporary of Bharatendu; his 'Bharat Saubhagya' (1888) which is an imitation of Bharatendu's 'Bharat-Durdasha' has likewise a political theme. With a prelude and six acts, it has a cast of over fifty male characters and over forty female characters. If compared with Bharatendu's 'Bharat-Durdasha', this play does not appear to be very impressive; due to a very heavy cast, it lacks proper characterisation, nor has the plot been well-constructed. The study of this play can inspire no Indian with pride for the past, worry for the present, or hope for the future. The language too is mostly Urdu, and Urdu verses and 'ghazals' have been frequently used. In the third scene of the fifth act speeches after speeches, lengthy and boring, run on to several pages and mostly couched in Persianised Urdu. The play is also unfit for the stage.

In his 'Prayag-Ramagaman' (1904), which describes Rama's visit to Bhardwaj's hermitage at Prayag in the company of his wife and younger brother, Premghan has achieved some success. As in Sanskrit plays educated men speak Sanskrit while the women mostly use Prakrit, similarly in this play Rama and others converse in 'Khari Boli' while Sita uses Braj-Bhasha. The play contains some portion of verse which too is quite good.

In addition to these two plays, the author has written 'Varangana-Rahasya' which is incomplete and 'Vridh-Vilap' which is a minor composition.

Radha Charan Goswami has written some seven plays; of these 'Sati-Chandravali' (1890), 'Amar Rathaur' (1894) and 'Shri Dama Natak' (1904) are plays; 'Budhe Munh Muhase' (1887), 'Tan Man Dhan Gosain Ji Ke Arpan' (1890), and 'Bhang-Tarang' (1892) are farces and 'Sarojini' is a translation. Of the three plays 'Sati Chandravali' has seven scenes; its theme is historical and is related to the reign of Aurangzeb. Chandravali, the heroine of the play, is carried away by prince Ashraf by force. The Hindu public appeals

to the Emperor for her release; getting disappointed the masses rise in revolt and Ashraf is murdered; at this Aurangzeb orders for a general massacre of the Hindus. In the end Chandravali commits suicide in order to put an end to unnecessary bloodshed; thusthe play ends in a tragedy. The play is quite interesting and the language and sentiments have been properly handled by the author.

'Amar Sinh Rathaur' (1894) is again a historical drama replete with the heroic sentiment. It has fifteen scenes and deals with the story of that famous Rajput Amar Sinh, (son of Raja Gaj Sinh of Jodhpur), his feelings of self-respect, his heroic deeds and ultimate death in the Moghul court.

'Shri Dama' (1904) has only five scenes besides a prelude. It deals with the story of Krishna's helping his Brahman friend Sudama in the latter's hour of need. In these plays, which are quite short we find a quick transfer of scenes; the author seems to be rushing on with the plot and has therefore been less careful towards characterisation. However, he has infused great force in his dialogues and the speeches of Amar Sinh are specially throbbing with heroism, pride and power. The author has divided all his plays into scenes and not into acts, and generally he has devoted one scene to one event. The farces of Radha Charan Goswami have been discussed in Chapter VI.

Pratap Narayan Mishra's 'Bharat-Durdasha' (1902) has three acts, and his work, which is mostly an imitation of Bharatendu's 'Bharat-Durdasha' is of ordinary merit. His 'Kali-Kautuk-Rupak' (1882) has the benedictory verse, no prelude and four scenes. It reflects the evil consequences of drinking, adultery, and prostitution, and refers to the immoral lives of Sadhus etc. Mishra's 'Hathi-Hamir' is a historical play, and it refers to the battle between Alauddin and Rana Hamir which took place as a result of the latter's giving shelter to a disobedient but virtuous chief of the former. The same theme has been dwelt upon by Hari Krishna Premi in his 'Ahuti'.[1] Mishra's Go-Sankat Natak' (1886) is a minor work which pleads for the protection of cows.

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1. See page 210 below.

From the point of view of dramatic art these plays of Pratap Narayan Mishra are very ordinary works; still, the author has given some evidence of his genius, poetic skill and refined humour. He has also made frequent use of proverbs and popular saying, which impart force to his style.

Devaki Nandan Tripathi has also written several minor plays. His 'Sita-Haran' (1876) which has a Prastavana and five acts, relates the abduction of Sita by Ravana. The themes of 'Rukmini-Haran' (1876) and 'Kans Vadh' (1879) have been gathered from the life-story of Lord Krishna. 'Nandotsav' (1880) describes the birth of Krishna and has four acts without any Prastavana. Nand, Yashoda and Rukmini speak 'Khari Boli' while the cowherds use Braj Bhasha. His 'Bal-Vivah-Natak' (1881) with its theme of child-marriage has three acts sub-divided into scenes. 'Prachand-Gorakshan' (1881) deals with the problem of cow-slaughter; the quarrel over this question takes the Hindus and the Muslims to the court, where the judgment is given in favour of the Hindus. Tripathi's other plays 'Lakshmi-Saraswati-Milan Natak' (1881) and 'Govadh-Nishedh-Natak' (1881) are again of very ordinary merit.

Besides these plays, Tripathi wrote a number of farces (e.g. 'Holi Khagesh', 'Jai Nar Sinh Ki' etc.) which have been discussed in the next chapter.

Shaligram (literary career 1850-1880) has written several plays, all of which are of a very ordinary standard. His 'Abhimanya-Vadh' (1896) which could have been better named as 'Jayadrath-Vadh', lacks adequate force, although the theme is thoroughly heroic. In 'Puru-Vikram', the battle between Alexander and Porus is given a dramatic form, but the playwright's knowledge of history seems to be very shallow and unsound. His 'Mordhwaj' (1890) is based on the well-known mythological story of Raja Mordhwaj. Raja's son carries away the horse of Yudhishthira's Horse-sacrifice and defeats the Pandava army including Arjun. At this Krishna approaches the king with a hard trial, but the righteous king succeeds in that trial; in the end, with Krishna's mediation, the hostile parties join hands in friendship.

Other plays of Shaligram, viz.'Arjun-Mad-Mardan', 'Lavanya-Vati Sudarshan' (1892) and 'Madhavanala- Kamakandala' are also very ordinary; of all the above works 'Mordhwaj' stands out with some merit, otherwise the author does not give much evidence of artistic skill or dramatic talent; neither in characterisation nor in plot-construction has the author achieved adequate success, nor is there much force in dialogue.

Ambika Datt Vyas has also written several plays, of which four or five deserve a mention. In 'Bharat-Saubhagya' (1887) the author has sought to eulogize British rule in India. 'Gosankat Natak' (1886) has three acts and it refers to the agitation of the Hindus over the question of cow-slaughter, which is accordingly banned by Akbar. 'Lalita-Natika' (1883) is again a small play in four acts; it is written in Braj Bhasha and seems to have been prepared for the purpose of Ras-Lila. Vyas's 'Man Ki Umang' (1886) is also a very minor work; the author also translated Bhatta Narayana's 'Veni-Samhar'.

As we have already said, all these plays are very ordinary works; they are devoid of the merits of proper plot-construction and characterisation; the language, though mostly simple, is not very forceful & impressive; there are occasional touches of humour in 'Gosankat Natak' and 'Lalita-Natika'.

Lala Khadg Bahadur Mall, the founder of the well-known Khadg-Vilas Press, Bankipore (Patna) has also written a number of ordinary plays; his 'Rati-Kusumayudh' (1885) is a short romantic drama consisting of five scenes; the theme of 'Maharas' (1885) has been taken from the Bhagvat Puran (Chapters 29-32); it is again a romantic play in which the erotic sentiment prevail; it begins with the Nandi and Prastavana and has four acts. 'Har-Talika' (1887) deals with a fast of Parvati and has four scenes only. 'Kalp-Vriksh' (1887) is based on Chapters 117-128 of Harivamsha; it has four acts and the erotic, the heroic, the terrible and the marvellous sentiments have been huddled together. 'Bharat-Lalana' (1888) is another minor play of the above author.

'Mira Bai' (1897) of Baldev Prasad Mishra deals with the

story of that famous Rajput princess Mira, who was a deep devotee of Lord Krishna. In 'Prabhas Milan' (1903) the same author has described, in a very interesting and emotional way, the chance-meeting between Krishna on one hand and Nand and Yashoda on the other after a long time. Baldev Prasad Mishra wrote another play 'Nand-Vida' (1900) also. Besides 'Prabhas-Milan' of Baldev Prasad Mishra, another 'Prabhas Milan' (1899) was written by Durga Prasad Mishra, which is an adaptation of Bengali 'Prabhas-Yajna'.

'Vivah-Vidamban' (1900) of Tota Ram throws light on the evils of child-marriage, and extravagent waste of money on the occasion of marriages. This play has no Nandi, no Prastavana and has only four acts; low characters and women speak Braj Bhasha, while others use 'Khari Boli'.

Krishna Dev Sharan Sinh 'Gop' translated Bharatendu's 'Shri Chandravali' into Braj Bhasha. In imitation of the same play he wrote 'Madhuri Rupak' (1888) which was taken, for a long time, to be the work of Bharatendu himself.[1] In this play, separation-stricken Madhuri describes her lot in separation from Krishna, to her friends. While Chandravali is united with her lord in the end in Bharatendu's play, here Madhuri simply falls down senseless and the play ends without any union. This play does not reach the standard of Bharatendu's 'Shri Chandravali' and is lacking in sincerity of feelings and sharpness of emotions.

'Madan Manjari' (1884) of Aman Sinh is a romantic drama; Madan and Manjari fall in love and exchange letters, but the young man is imprisoned by the maiden's father. Hero's father attacks the capital of girl's father, rescues his son, and the lover and beloved are happily married. This play has been written in the fashion of Bharatendu's 'Vidya-Sundar' and it also quotes many verses from that play; from the artistic point of view this play is quite ordinary. Damodar Shastri wrote 'Ram-Lila-Natak' (Circa 1889) a very lengthy play, embracing the whole plot of the Ramayana. Inspite of being a Maratha, the author has written correct and polished Hindi. He also wrote 'Bal Khel' and 'Radha-Madhav' which are quite ordinary plays.

1. Braj Ratna Das; Hindi Natya Sahitya, page 93; L.S. Varshaneya; 'Adhunik Hindi Sahitya, page 238.

story of that famous Rajput [illegible], who was a deep [illegible] of [illegible]. In '[illegible]' (1903) the same [illegible] described, in a very [illegible] and emotional way, the [illegible] meeting between [illegible] on the other [illegible] '[illegible]' (1906) [illegible] 'Prabodh-Milan' of [illegible] Mishra, [illegible] 'Prabodh Milan' (1898) was written by [illegible] Mishra, which is an adaptation of [illegible] 'Prabodh-Chandrodaya'.

'Mayank-Manjari' (1891) [illegible] has thrown light on the [illegible] of [illegible] and [illegible] on the [illegible] of [illegible]. This play [illegible] and [illegible] Bhasha, [illegible] use 'Khari Boli'.

Krishna Dev Sharan Singh 'Gop' translated Bharatendu's 'Shri Chandravali' into Braj bhasha. In imitation of the same [illegible] he wrote 'Madhuri [illegible]' (1888) which was taken, for a long time, to be the work of Bharatendu himself.[1] In this play, [illegible] 'Madhuri' describes [illegible] her friends. While 'Chandravali' [illegible] Bharatendu's play, here Madhuri [illegible] down [illegible] play ends without any union. This play does not [illegible] of Bharatendu's 'Shri Chandravali' and it lacks in [illegible] of feelings and [illegible] of emotions.

'[illegible]' (1904), [illegible] fall in love and [illegible] letters, [illegible] is [illegible] by the maiden's [illegible] father, [illegible]. This play [illegible] Bharatendu's '[illegible]' and [illegible] that plays [illegible] were.

Damodar Shastri wrote '[illegible]' [illegible] famous play, [illegible].

1. [illegible] Das: '[illegible]' [illegible]
'[illegible]' [illegible]

Ratna Chand, an advocate of the Etawah High Court also wrote a few very ordinary plays like 'Nyay Sabha Natak' (1892), 'Prapanch Natak' and 'Hindi Urdu Natak' (1890). His 'Bhram Jalak' is the translation of Shakespeare's 'Comedy of Errors.'

Jwala Prasad Mishra wrote 'Sita Vanvas Natak' (1895) and translated 'Veni-Samhar' and the 'Shakuntala'.

Kashi Nath Khatri wrote a few plays of ordinary merit; his first work 'Gram Pathshala Tatha Nikrisht Naukari' (1883) consists of two short plays; in the first the author has depicted the miserable lot of village school-teachers, and in the second he has described the evils of unemployment and has told how difficult it is to get employment and more miserable it is to carry it on. These plays are devoid of any artistic merit, although there is ample force in author's description of contemporary condition of service and the lot of village teachers.

More interesting but equally lacking in beauties of plot-construction and characterisation is author's next work named 'Tīn Itihasik Rupak' (1884); this work is a collection of three short plays, of which the first play 'Sindhu Desh Ki Rajkumarian' refers to the history of Sindh, and relates the story of the bold attitude of the daughters of King Dahar. The second play of this collection is 'Gunnaur Ki Rani' and the last is 'Lava Ji Ka Svapna'. Besides these, numerous other plays were written by various dramatists; but they are too ordinary to deserve a mention here.

Adding a word of general criticism (on these lesser plays) we can say that most of these plays betray more or less influence of the Parsi theatre. Their writers were careful towards the entertainment of the people alongside of their aims of patriotism and social reform. They produced plays which aimed at the uplift of the country and religious integrity but which, at the same time, afforded entertainment of the nature of 'Indar Sabha', 'Gul Bakawali' and 'Laila-Majnu' of the Parsi theatres to a certain extent. Due to this very reason we find that these plays are mostly very ordinary works from the artistic viewpoint, and they are generally lacking in systematic plot-construction and appropriate characterisation.

Natha Thanh, [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] a few very ordinary plays like '[illegible]' ([illegible]), [illegible] Natak and '[illegible]' ([illegible]). [illegible] is the translation of Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors.

[illegible] wrote '[illegible] Natak' ([illegible]) and translated '[illegible]' and [illegible] '[illegible]'.

[illegible] wrote a few plays of ordinary merit; his first work '[illegible]' ([illegible]), [illegible] of two short plays; in the first of which he depicted the [illegible] [illegible] of village school-teachers, and in the second he describes the evils of unemployment and how [illegible] it is to [illegible] employment and [illegible] it is to [illegible] it on. These plays are devoid of any [illegible], [illegible] their simple force [illegible] author's [illegible] of [illegible] condition of service and the lot of village teachers.

More interesting but [illegible] in [illegible] of plot construction and characterisation is [illegible] next work '[illegible]' ([illegible]). This work is a collection of three short plays, of which the first play '[illegible]' refers to the history of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of the daughters of King [illegible]. The second [illegible] is '[illegible]' and the last is '[illegible]'. Besides these, [illegible] other plays were written by [illegible] but they are too ordinary to deserve a [illegible].

[illegible] a [illegible] of general [illegible] [illegible] we can say that [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible] writers were [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of the people [illegible] of [illegible] social [illegible]. [illegible] plays [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

CHAPTER VI

OTHER PLAYWRIGHTS OF THE NINTEENTH CENTURY (Contd.)

A. Farces and Satires.

The Comic is one of the nine chief sentiments of Sanskrit drama; and of the ten varieties of Rupaka, 'Prahasana' is dominated with humour. But while the aim of Sanskrit Prahasana was simply to produce humour and elicit laughter,[1] the Hindi farce aims at satirising the contemporary social, religious and political evils, in addition to their humorous effect. In this respect our Hindi farce is indebted to the West, and it was in imitation of Western farces that our farcical playwrights developed the practice of rediculing the social and religious evils of the day.

In Hindi literature it was Bharatendu who set the ball rolling by his 'Vaidiki Himsa' in 1873, which is the first farce in Hindi literature; then in 1881 he wrote 'Andher Nagari'; both these farces have been dealt with earlier.[2]

After Bharatendu farce became very popular in Hindi drama; to some extent it even surpassed the serious drama in attracting the common man and gradually its range of subject-matter also became wider. Evil practices and medieval customs like polygamy, child-marriage, drinking, meat-eating, illiteracy, adultery, indifference towards wedded wives and attachment to the prostitutes soon attracted the attention of contemporary writers. Baneful effect of English education and blind imitation of Western civilization and fashions also became the target of the satirist; religious superstitious, blind faith of the orthodox class in Sadhus and Gurus, hypocrisy of the Sadhus and so-called Pandits, their selfish ends and immoral pursuits also could not escape the lashing of the satirical playwrights.

1. Keith : Sanskrit Drama, page 348, and 260-264.
2. See page 44-5 above.

In 1877 Bal Krishna Bhatia wrote 'Jaisa Kam Vaisa Parinam'; in this farce Bhatia has, in an interesting as well as effective manner, emphasized the consequences of indulging in wine and wanton women; this is one of the best farces of this period. The hero, Rasik Lal is so much lost in wine and womanising that he never cares to attend to his faithful wife; he wastes money extravagantly on his immoral pursuits, and in the end comes to his senses when beaten and betrayed by his most beloved harlot.

In a very vivid and impressive manner the playwright has portrayed the fickleness of a harlot's mind; Mohini herself sums up the true character of a prostitute in the following words—

मोहिनी—..... हम लोग बज़ार की बैठने वाली हैं जिसे हम चाहैं उसके लिये प्राण तक दे डालें। सिर्फ़ जी आना चाहिए, और जिसे हम बिगाड़ा चाहैं उसका निस्तार भी कहीं नहीं है। हमारे स्वभाव को नहीं जानता, सुन—

मनसे करैं और को ध्यान, दृग से करैं और को मान।
अन्य पुरुष से करैं विहार, तन से करैं और को प्यार॥

(Scene IV).

Malati, the faithful wife of Rasik Lal plays an interesting trick with her husband in order to bring him round. When her husband is about to return home, she pretends making love to her female servant disguised as a man. When Rasik Lal, mad with jealousy and wrath, decides to punish her, she makes a very bold reply:—

मालती—क्यों नहीं, क्या हमारा आदमी का चोला नहीं है? या कि हमारी देह लोहू मांस की नहीं है? क्या हमारे मन नहीं है? क्या हमारे इन्द्रियां नहीं हैं? क्या हमको सुख दुःख का ज्ञान नहीं है? हम तो कोई चीज़ ही न ठहरीं, और फिर तुम हमारा बड़ा सत्कार करते हो न! (Scene V)

As this Rasik Lal swears to give up that habit for good, and the play ends with this Bharat-Vakya—

होहिं एकपत्नीव्रत-रत सब भारत नर-वर।
तजहिं कुपथ, पथ गहहिं धर्म कर कुमति तजकर॥
तजि वेश्या संग रमन करहिं श्रद्धा निज तिय पर।
जासों सुधरहिं[1] दशा दीन भारत के सत्वर॥

As in his serious plays, so in this farce also Bhatta displays great command over language; here too he has used several English phrases and sentences (e.g. in Scene I) which will be difficult to understand for a Hindi-knowing audience.

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1. See page 67-69 above.

After Bal Krishna Bhatia, Hindi drama was flooded with farces. Devaki Nandan Tripathi, one of the most important farcical writers wrote the following satires- 'Raksha Bandhan' (1878), 'Ek Ek Ke Tin Tin' (1879),' Stri-Charitra' (1879), 'Vaishya-Vilas', 'Bail Chheh Take Ko', 'Jay Nar Sinh Ki' (1883) 'Sainkada Men Das Das', and 'Kaljugi Janeu' (1886).

'Raksha-Bandhan' points out the evils of drinking and prostitution. 'Ek Ek Ke Tin Tin' describes the dishonesty of the borrowing persons; 'Vaishya-Vilas' again deals with the vice of prostitution, while 'Stri Charitra' hints at the cleverness and cunning nature of womankind. In 'Jay Nar Sinh Ki' it is described how parents lose their children's life by not resorting to proper medicine and treatments but by taking to foolish and superstitious methods of charms and incantatious etc. Other farces of Tripathi also deal with similar social, religious and domestic issues.

L. Khadg Bahadur Mall wrote 'Bharat Arat' (1888) in four scenes; it points out the defects of the courts, evils of drinking etc. and pleads loyalty to the Crown. In 'Budhe Munh Muhase' (1887) Radha Charan Goswami shows how people nearest to the church are often farthest from God; those hypocrites who pretend to be strictly religious outwardly but are really given to sensuality, greed and attachment are the target of author's irony in this farce. 'Tan Man Dhan Gosain Ji Ke Arpan' (1890) is another interesting farce by the same author; it has eight scenes and it is written entirely in prose. In this work the author has ridiculed those foolish husbands who put blind faith in corrupted Gurus, who in return cleverly violate the modesty of their women-folk.

In 'Chaupat Chapet' (1891) Kishori Lal Goswami also satirises the vices of drinking and gambling etc. The heroine Champak Lata, who is an embodiment of virtue and nobility sets right Madan Mohan, a voluptuary who tried to seduce her. In 'Kalijugi-Vivah' Dewaki Nandan Tiwari deprecates the practice of early marriage, and the practice of singing vulgar songs on the occasion of marriage.

'Jaise Ko Taisa' of Gopal Ram Gahmari is a sharp satire on the blunder of marriage in advanced age. 'Vaishya-Vilas' (1893) of

Nawal Sinh brings to light the selfish and humiliating treatment of prostitutes and their immoral atmosphere of life. Vijayanand Tripathi wrote 'Maha-Andher-Nagari' (1892) and Dev Datt Sharma wrote 'Ati Andher Nagari' (1895) both of which are imitations of Bharatendu-'s 'Andher-Nagari'. Radha Charan Goswami also wrote 'Bhang-Tarang' (1892) and Baldev Prasad Mishra wrote 'Lalla Babu' (1900). In addition to these a few other minor farces were also written by various writers.

Summing up we can say that the three outstanding writers in the domain of farce are Bharatendu, Devaki Nandan Tripathi and Bal Krishna Bhatta. The humour of these three writers, and to some extent of Radha Charan Goswami, is of a high standard, and their irony is sharp and forceful. In the case of others, their attempts are mostly disappointing and disgusting; their humour is forced and artificial; they have no scruples about vulgarity and indecent talk. Again, it is mostly the prostitute, wine, dice, the hypocritical Sadhu, the minor bride or bride-groom, the miserly millionaire etc. that has been, again and again, made the target of their satire; even then their satire is not penetrating and effective; it mostly lacks due force and is lifeless; their jokes are un-natural and in order to elicit laughter they resort to gross improbabilities and inconsistencies of characterisation.

Inspite of these defects the only consolation can be found in the fact that these writers were the earliest playwrights who tried their hand at farce in imitation of the West; they lived in a society which was groaning under the unhealthy influence of these vices and evils, and their farces truly represent the social and domestic spirit of those times.

B. Translations.

As we have remarked earlier,[1] towards the middle of the nineteenth century, the European scholars commenced a careful and critical study of Sanskrit literature, introduced it in England and other European countries and translated various works of celebrated Sanskrit authors into Western languages. Sir William Jones took the lead

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1. See page 25-26 above.

by translating Kalidasa's Shakuntala. Monier Williams, Roth, William Prinsep, Max Muller, Bohtlingk, Macdonell, Winternitz, Keith and others gradually followed; Goethe loftily praised the 'Shakuntala'. Although the efforts of these great scholars succeeded in giving Sanskrit its due place in the West, still the Indians were too slow to realise the worth of their ancient literature. But the real tide of awakening in our country-men (especially of the North) came as a result of the commendable and untiring efforts of Swami Dayanand, the founder of the Arya Samaj. The enlightening lectures and discussions of Swami Dayanand brought home to the Indians their past glory, which they had forgotten in course of time. The authority of the Vedas was once again restored and people once again began to take pride in their past glory and interest in their past history and literature.

Translations from Sanskrit.

In Hindi the first noteworthy attemp at translation was made by Raja Lakshman Sinh,[1] who translated Kalidasa's Shakuntala' in 1861. Earlier, a few writers had tried to translate some Sanskrit plays and some of them translated 'Prabodha Chandrodaya'; but, as we have shown in Chapter III, these attempts were nothing more than versified conversation, and cannot be rightly called translations.

After Raja Lakshman Sinh, Bharatendu comes next in the list of translators; he translated 'Ratnavali' which he left incomplete; next he translated 'Vidya-Sundar', 'Pakhand-Vidamban', 'Karpura-Manjari' and 'Mudra Rakshasa.[2] Then Dev Datt Tiwari translated Bhavabhuti's 'Uttara-rama-charita' (1871); Nandlal Vishvanath translated 'Uttara-rama-charita (1886) again and 'Shakuntala' (1888). Rameshwar Bhatta translated Harsha's 'Ratnavali' (1895); and Bal Mukand Gupta completed Bharatendu's translation of 'Ratnavali' (1898), published (1902). Jwala Prasad Mishra translated 'Veni-Samhar' (1898) and 'Shakuntala'. Shitala Prasad translated 'Prabodha-Chandrodaya' (1879). 'Mrichchhakatika' of Shudraka was translated by several writers including Gadadhar Bhatta and Damodar Shastri.

Rai Bahadur L. Sita Ram translated several plays from Sanskrit

1. See page 27-8 above.
2. For these translations of Bharatendu see Chapter IV above.

and English; he translated Bhavabhuti's 'Maha-Vira-Charita' (1897), 'Uttara-Ram-Charita' (1897) and 'Malati-Madhava' (1898); he also translated Kalidasa's 'Malavikagnimitram' (1898), Shudraka's 'Mrichchhakatika' (1898) and Harsha's 'Naganand' (1900). Shaligram also translated 'Malati-Madhava' (1881). In addition to these translations a few minor and anonymous writers also translated certain Sanskrit plays.

Some of the above translations (e.g. 'Malavikagnimitram' of L. Sita Ram and 'Ratnavali' of Bal Mukand Gupta) are quite successful and they possess the charm and force of the original to a great extent. On the other hand certain plays were spoiled in the hands of translators (e.g. Jwala Prasad Mishra's translation of 'Shakuntala'). These transaltions are useful for those who do not know Sanskrit, and can enjoy Sanskrit plays only through the medium of translations.

Translations from Bengali

But while our Hindi scholars enriched their dramatic literature with translations of various Sanskrit plays, they did not let Bengali drama go unavailed of. We find that soon after Bharatendu and some of his learned contemporaries, the inartistic Parsi theatrical plays began to strengthen their hold on Hindi masses. In order to wean them from these degrading Parsi plays, certain Hindi scholars thought it wise to place before the masses some translations of beautiful Bengali dramas. Accordingly Ram Krishna Varma translated 'Padmavati' (1889) of Raj Kishore De, 'Vir Nari' (1899) of Dwarika Nath Ganguli and 'Krishna Kumari' (1899) of Michael Madhusudan Datt. The theme of 'Krishna Kumari' is the sacrifice of a young Rajput princess; the rulers of Jaipur and Jodhpur simultaneously apply for the hand of Krishna Kumari, the princess of Mewar; both advance a threat that their request, if rejected, would mean war. The poor father of the girl is in a dilemma; he does not know which way to decide. In the end the beautiful princess is sacrificed in order to save Mewar.

'Padmavati' deals with the love-story of Raj Indra Nil and Padmavati; the inclusion of Narada and other celestial characters,

and Bhalla [illegible] translated Bhavabhuti's 'Mahavira-Charita' (1897), 'Uttara-Rama-Charita' (1897) and 'Malati-Madhava' (1898); he also translated Kalidasa's 'Malavikagnimitram' (18[illegible]), Bhatt Narayan's 'Veni-Samhara' (1883), and Harsha's 'Nagananda' (1900). Shaligram also translated 'Malati-Madhava' (1881). In addition to these translations, a few minor and anonymous writers also translated certain Sanskrit plays.

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'Padmavati' [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. Padmavati [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

the tug of war between Muraja and Rati, the two wives of Kuber inter-link the celestial and the terrestrial plots. 'Vir Nari' deals with the fall of Sindh to the Arabs and the heroic fight of Dahar's wife after the death of her husband. Varma has achieved great success in these translations; they are very interesting and has the life and force of the original; they display author's great commend over-language too. Bal Krishna Bhatta also translated 'Padmavati' and 'Sharmishtha' from Bengali, but these translations are incomplete. Munshi Udit Narayan Lal translated 'Sati-Natak' (1889) of Man Mohan Vasu, 'Ashrumati Natak' (1895) and 'Dip-Nirvan'. In 1888 Pandit Brij Nath translated Michael Madhusudan's farce 'Eki Ki Bole Sabhyata' under the title 'Kya Isi Ko Sabhyata Kahte Hain'; in this farce the author satirises the evil consequences of English education.

In addition to these, Keshav Ram Bhatta translated two plays from Bengali; but they are not faithful translations and can be better called adaptations. In 1877 he wrote 'Sajjad Sumbul' which is based on Bengali 'Sharat Aur Sarojini'; in 1880 he wrote 'Shamshad Sausan' which is an adaptation of Bengali 'Surendra-Vinodini'. The plot of both these plays is romantic and the leading characters are mostly Muslims; consequently, the language is stuffed with hard Urdu words and phrases, but it is, however, very brisk and forceful.

In 'Sajjad-Sumbul' there are six acts with 27 scenes. Sumbul, the heroine of the piece, is orphan and helpless; she seeks shelter with Sajjad, and incidentally they fall in love with each other. Sajjad's sister Gulshan catches fancy for Abbas, who is also residing at Sajjad's house. The story turns through winding and baffling intri-gues, and in the end the pining lovers are coupled together. In addition to the love-intrigues, occasional humorous touches produce the light effect.

'Shamshad Sausan' has four acts with 17 scenes; in all it has seven characters, five males and two females. The main plot is the love-story of Shamshad and Sausan. Roe Sahib, the Joint Magistrate represents the British bureaucratic rule in India, and he pays for his haughtiness, insolence and voluptuous habits. Shamshad is a bold, well-mannered and patriotic youth, and his character informs us of the political and social awakening of those days. Both these

adaptations are very successful attempts of Bhatta; they are strong evidence of author's histrionic talents and his dexterity in delineating the social and political condition of those days.

Although these translations of Bengali dramas gave much interesting material to our Hindi readers, yet they did not produce any remarkable effect on Hindi drama. The only impression that they left on Hindi drama was a slight touch of modernism (which the Bengali drama had developed through its earlier contact with the West) which we find in comparatively greater quantity in later Hindi drama than before.

Translations from English.

Besides Sanskrit and Bengali drama, English drama too was not neglected by Hindi scholars and playwrights; they tried to draw the best out of English drama also, as they did to a great extent from Sanskrit drama and to some extent from Bengali drama. As English became the court language during British rule in India, various English plays were prescribed for study in schools and colleges; this attracted the attention of Hindi playwrights towards English drama. Moreover, as Shakespeare's plays have ample affinity[1] with classical Indian drama, Shakespeare's plays soon became popular among the cultured classes.

The earliest Hindi translation of English drama is B.Tota Ram's translation of Joseph Addison's 'Cato' under the title 'Keto Krittant Natak' (1879). Cato, a pious citizen of Rome prefers death to seeking shelter under Caesar, the enemy of his land. There are five acts in this drama, and the language is mostly 'Khari Boli' with an admixture of Braj Bhasha words. Original English names have been retained in the translation as is obvious from the title of the translation.

Shakespeare's 'Comedy of Errors' was translated under the title 'Bhram-Jalak' by Ratna Chand of Etawah in 1789. The translator has nicely infused Indian atmosphere in this English drama; English names, titles and places have all been changed to appropriate Indian ones; for example the twin brothers receive the names छोटा हिंडोल, बड़ा हिंडोल; छोटा यज्ञदत्त, बड़ा यज्ञदत्त; Dev Datt and Padmavati are the names given to parents

1. See A.A. Macdonell A History of Sanskrit Literature, London 1900 pages 350-351 & Keith Sanskrit Drama page 355.

of twin Yajnadattas; necessary changes have also been made in Western customs and fashions in order to make them suited to Indian atmosphere and environments. It is a free translation, but the plot has been kept mostly the same.

'Merchant of Venice' has been translated by many writers; in 1880 Bharatendu translated this play under the heading 'Durlabh Bhandhu'; the translator has not tempered with the plot of the original play; but while he has changed English names of persons and places to Indian names(e.g. Shakespeare's Antonio, Basanio, Portia and Shylock etc. have been respectively changed to Anant, Basant, Purashri, Shailaksh etc. the Aryas and the Jains assume the role of Christians and Jains respectively) he has not very much tried to change the English atmosphere of the drama to appropriate Indian atmosphere.

As compared with Ratna Chand Bharatendu does not appear to have achieved much success in this translation;[1] in retaining the original plot, also with Western atmosphere and customs, but changing the names, Bharatendu has produced inconsistencies in his translation. The atmosphere cannot become Indian by merely changing the names of places and characters; it would have been wiser and better to retain the original names also if the atmosphere was not to be Indianised, or to have completely Indianised the spirit and atmosphere of the play if names etc. were to be Indianised.

In 1888 Arya, a lady writer of Jubblepore translated the above play and named it 'Venice Ka Vyapari'; the translation is faithful and has verse for original verse and prose in place of prose.[2] Besides, Baleshwar Prasad and Dyal Sinh Thakur are known to have translated this very play under the title 'Venice Ka Saudagar', but these translations are not available. Purohit Gopi Nath of Jaipur translated 'As You Like It '(1896) under the title 'Man Bhawan', and 'Romeo and Juliet' under the title 'Prem Lila'(1897); these translations are entirely in prose, and they greatly retain the sense and charm of the original.

1. L.S. Varshneya: Adhunik Hindi Sahitya, page 265.
2. Som Nath Gupta, Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas; page 88.

of twin [illegible]; Necessary changes have also been made in Western customs and fashions in order to make them suited to Indian atmosphere and environments. It is a free translation, but the plot has been kept mostly the same.

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In 1888 Arya, a lady writer of [illegible], [illegible] the above play and named it 'Venice ka Vyapari'; the translator [illegible] has used verse for original verse and prose in place of prose. Besides, [illegible] [illegible] he have translated only [illegible] under [illegible] [illegible], but these translations are not available. [illegible] of [illegible] translated 'As You Like It' ([illegible]), [illegible], and 'Romeo and Juliet' under the [illegible]. These translations are [illegible].

[illegible]

1. [illegible]

In 1893 Mathura Prasad Upadhyay wrote his 'Sahasendra Sahas' which is a translation of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'; the translator has given an Indian touch to the whole story, and his translation does not suffer from any inconsistencies of atmosphere and surroundings. R.B. Lala Sita Ram also translated about a dozen important plays of Shakespeare, but since they were mostly written in the first quarter of the twentieth century they have been discussed in a succeeding chapter.[1]

1. See Chapter XVI below.

CHAPTER VII

DRAMA OF THE PARSI THEATRE.

The dramas of Bharatendu school, we know, were written with a spirit of reaction [1] against the cheap, inartistic and vulgar plays of the Parsi theatres. But since the common people liked the Parsi performances very much, the plays of Bharatendu school which aimed more at art and purity than entertainment failed to enlist the popular support. Consequently, a limited number of people, who were cultured, possessed of refined taste and disgusted with Parsi art, patronized these dramas, while the masses in general went to Parsi performances.

The English people had settled in big cities like Bombay and Calcutta long before the middle of the ninteenth century; for their entertainment they had established their own theatres, where they used to stage [2] leading English dramas and farces, and later also the translations of 'Shakuntala' and other famous Sanskrit plays. Those Parsis and Hindus who loved art and possessed on aesthetic taste, were naturally impressed by these performances; so, in imitation of these amateur (and sometimes professional) companies of the English, the Parsis first of all established their theatrical companies in big cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi. [3] In the beginning the aim of these Parsi companies might have aesthetic and artistic than only making-money, but soon they turned their companies into good sources of making money, and their theatres kept only the aim of making money in view.

The first Company of this kind was 'The Original Theatrical Company' of Pestonji Framji, which existed in Bombay in 1870. The most notable actors of this company were Parsis, viz. Khurshedji Balliwala, Cowasji Khatau, Sohrabji and Jehangirji. Mahmud Mian

1. See page 3.447 above. 2. Yajnik: Indian Theatre; pages 83-85 & 91.
3. Ibid, and also R.B. Saxena: A History of Urdu Literature page 353.

'Raunaq' Benarsi wrote plays for the Company; one of his plays 'Insaf-i-Mahmud', printed in Bombay in Gujrati characters in 1882 A.D. became very popular.[1] Besides 'Raunaq', Hussain Mian Zarif also wrote for this company; in all he wrote over thirty plays some of which are 'Shirin-Farhad,' 'Laila-o-Majnu', 'Gul Bakawali', 'Ali-Baba', 'Ishrat Sabha' etc. The Original Theatrical Company popularised drama to a great extent, and it weaned people from other forms of entertainment.[2] On the death of Framji, the Company broke down and Balliwala and Cowasji started their separate companies.

In 1877 A.D. Khurshedji Balliwala set up a theatre at Delhi, known as the 'Victoria Theatrical Company'. Among its leading actors were Balliwala himself—who was famous as a great comic actor—Rustam Ji, Miss Khurshed, Miss Mehtab and a European actress Miss Mary Fenton. Balliwala was adventurous in spirit and he took his company to England where, however, it sustained heavy losses which were made up on its return to Bombay. Vinayak Prasad Talib was chosen to write for this Company; besides Laila-o-Nahar and other Urdu plays some of his famous Hindi plays are 'Vikram-Vilas', 'Gopi Chand', 'Harishchandra' etc.[3] The language of these plays is not pure Hindi and can be better called Hindustani. The Company went to pieces on the death of Balliwala.

About the same time (Circa 1877 A.D.) Cowasji Khatau also started a rival company called the 'Alfred Theatrical Company'. Cowasji, the proprietor of this Company was a superb tragedian, and he is known as the 'Irving of India';[4] he acted the part of Romeo and Hamlet in a masterly manner. Other leading actors of this Company were Mancher Shah, Gulzar Khan, Madho Ram, Master Mohan, Miss Zohra and Miss Gohar. After Cowasji's death at Lahore in 1914 A.D., his son Jehangirji ran the show for four years and then the Company was sold to Mr. Madan who died in 1923 A.D. Syed Mahdi Hasan 'Ahsan' of Lucknow wrote plays for this Company and after him Pt. Narayan Prasad Betab of Delhi wrote for this company. His Qatl-i-Nazir became very popular and the reason, to a certain extent was that a

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1. Saxena: A History of Urdu Literature, pages 353-4.
2. Saxena: A History of urdue Literature; page 354.
3. Ibid page 355.
4. Ibid.

'Betaab' Benarsi wrote plays for the Company; one of his plays 'Insaf-i-Mahmud', printed in Bombay in Gujarati characters in [illegible] A.D. became very popular.[1] Besides 'Ahmad', Husain [illegible] also wrote for this company; in all he wrote over thirty plays [illegible] of which are 'Khun-e-Nahaq', 'Laila-o-Majnu', 'Gul Bakawali', '[illegible] [illegible]', 'Fateh [illegible]' etc. The Original Theatrical Company popular[ised] drama to a great extent, and it weaned people from other [forms of] entertainment. On the death of [illegible],[2] the Company broke down and Balliwala and Cowasji started their separate companies.

In 1877 A.D. Khurshedji Balliwala set up a theatre [illegible] known as the 'Victoria Theatrical Company'. Among its leading actors were Balliwala himself—who was famous as a great comic actor—[illegible] Ji, Mirza Khurshed, [illegible] and a European actress Miss Mary Fenton. Balliwala was adventurous in spirit and he took his company to England where, however, it [illegible] heavy losses which [illegible] up on its return to Bombay. [illegible] [illegible] was chosen to write for this company; besides Laila-o-Majnu and other [illegible] some of his famous [illegible] plays are '[illegible]', 'Gopi Chand', '[illegible]' etc.[3] The language of these plays is not pure [illegible] and can be better called Hindustani. The Company went to pieces [after] the death of Balliwala.

About the same time (circa 1877 A.D.) [illegible] started a rival company called the 'Alfred [illegible] Company'. [illegible], the proprietor of this company was a [illegible] [illegible] is known as the 'Irving of India'.[1] [illegible] the part of Hamlet [illegible] [illegible]. Other leading [illegible] of this company were [illegible], [illegible], [illegible], [illegible] and [illegible]. After [illegible]'s death at [illegible] [illegible] ran the show for [illegible] years and [illegible] [illegible] to Mr. [illegible] who [illegible] in 1893 A.D. [illegible] [illegible] wrote plays for this company [illegible] [illegible] or [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] very popular [illegible]

1. [illegible]
2. [illegible]
3. Ibid. Page [illegible].
4. Ibid.

prostitute of the name of Nazir, of Delhi had been killed just then and it was the talk of the city. Betab's 'Mahabharat', first staged in 1913 A.D. at Delhi created a sensation for sometime wherever it was staged. Betab's 'Krishna Sudama' and 'Patni Pratap' also became quite popular.

When these theatrical companies of the Parsis began to make big fortunes, several Hindus and Mohammadans were also tempted to start their own companies, on the lines of Parsi companies. Accordingly Mohammad Ali 'Nakhuda' fleated a company on the lines of 'The Alfred Theatrical Company' and christened it 'The New Alfred Theatrical Company'. Its Managing Director was Sohrabji, a great comic actor, and he subsequently became a partner in the concern. Agha Mohammad Hashr Kashmiri and Pt. Radhe Shyam Kathavachak were the leading playwrights of this company. Hashr has written dozens of plays, some of which are entirely original while in others he has borrowed the plots from English writers. Besides his numerous Urdu plays, some of his Hindi plays are 'Sur Das', 'Sita Banbas', 'Shrawan Kumar', 'Madho Murli' etc. Hashr has been called 'Marlowe of the Urdu Stage;' he delineates with the force and vigour of a Marlowe, and his defects too are precisely those of Marlowe.[1] Intensity rather than delicacy, deep colours and strong contrasts more than fine shades are his rule; this tells on refined or sensitive nerves particularly when the most horrible crimes are allowed by the author to be represented on the stage.[2] Hashr also started the practice of interweaving two different plots in the same play; poetry often subordinates the action in his plays and is indulged in for its own sake; petty and contemptible jokes are also introduced sometimes, which mar the beauty of the scene.

Pt. Radhe Shyam Kathavachak of Bareilly has written several plays for various theatrical companies. His first famous play 'Vir Abhimanyu', was written for the 'New Alfred Company'; it was written in 1914 and it was the first Hindi play to be staged in a Parsi Theatre. This play is quite beautiful from the artistic viewpoint, although it has abundant verse like other plays of the Parsi Theatre.

1. Saxena: A History of Urdu Literature page 357.
2. Ibid.

Besides 'Vir Abhimanyu' Kathavachak has written several plays like 'Parivartan' (1925), 'Mashriqi Hoor' (1926) 'Shri Krishana-vtar' (1926), 'Rukmini Mangal' (1927), 'Shrawan Kumar' (1928), 'Ishwar-Bhakti' (1929), 'Draupadi Swayamvar' (1929) etc. All these plays were written for and staged by the 'New Alfred Company'. In 1928 Kathavachak wrote 'Usha-Aniruddh Natak' for 'Shri Sur Vijay Company' of Kathiawar; he also wrote a few more plays for various other Companies.

The theme of most of Kathavachak's plays is mythological or drawn from Mahabharat. He has tried to improve the general tone of the-atrical plays and to purge them, as far as possible, of their vulgarities and obscenities; but, like other theatrical plays, Kathavachak's dramas also abound in supernatural element and melo-dramatic and sensational scenes.

After leaving the 'New Alfred Company' Hashr also started a company of his own known as the 'Shakespeare Theatrical Company'; but after a short-lived career of triumph it expired at Sialkot causing great financial losses. By this time several other companies like the 'Old Parsi Theatrical Company', 'Imperial Company', 'Alex-andria Company' etc. came into existence, but were closed after short span owing to lack of wise management and finances.[1]

Besides the above theatrical companies, there were two more professional theatrical companies, namely the 'Sur Vijay Company' of Kathiawar and the 'Vyakul Bharat Company' of Meerut. Although some influence of Parsi Theatres was visible in these two Companies also, yet their atmosphere was mostly purged of the vulgarities and distastefulness of the Parsi Theatres and these Companies made it a point to patronize purely Hindi plays. While 'Sur Vijay Company' won great fame due to its successful performance of 'Usha-Aniruddh Natak' of Kathavachak, the 'Bharat Vyakul Company' had a dazzling career for its wonderful play 'Buddh Dev' of Vishambhar Nath 'Vyakul' himself.[2]

1. Saxena : A History of Urdue Literature, page 358.

2. Ibid.

General Criticism of these Theatrical Plays.

Although these Theatrical Companies were owned and manned by different persons, still in general atmosphere and spirit, in technique and tendencies, all these Companies were very much alike each other. Usually each Company had its own playwright, who not only wrote plays for his theatre, but often directed and participated in the performance also. Being, therefore, quite familiar with the requirements of the stage, these playwrights always wrote such plays as could be successfully represented on the stage. They had, however, to follow the instructions of the proprietors while writing their dramas; and as the proprietors always looked to the aim of making maximum monetary gain, the playwrights had to provide the public with utmost entertainment than any glowing piece of art. In order to make their plays popular in the masses, they always hunted for melodramatic and sensational scenes and seldom attended to the beauties of characterisation and plot-construction etc.

They usually borrowed their plot from Persian fables and love-stories (e.g. 'Ali Baba', 'Laila-o-Majnu', 'Shirin Farhad' etc.) interesting episodes of the Puranas (e.g. 'Harishchandra', 'Sati - Savitri' 'Gangavataran' etc.) and the Epics ('Mahabharat' 'Vir Abhimanyu' 'Sita Banbas' 'Krishna Sudama etc.) romantic stories from English literature (e.g. 'Romeo and Juliet' etc.) and popular Indian themes (e.g. 'Puran Bhakta' 'Gopi Chand' etc.).

The atmosphere of these plays often used to be of frivolity, flirtation and even vulgarity; the love they represented was mostly wanton and unmaidenly; their humour rose from cheap buffoonery and was generally marked by vulgarity and boisterousness than culture and refinement. Further, while in Sanskrit drama great attention was paid to 'Rasa' or the sentiment,[1] these theatrical plays attached greater importance to story-interest and sensational scenes. It was Urdu that was mostly used in these plays, and occasionally hard Persian words and phrases were hurled in course of conversation; it was due to the efforts of Narayan Prasad 'Betab' and Radhe Shyam 'Kathavachak' that Hindi was introduced on the Parsi stage in the twentieth century.

1. Keith: SANSKRIT DRAMA, PAGE 276-282.

Another characteristic feature of these theatrical plays is their use of rhyming prose; in addition to that, in all theatrical plays, characters frequently resort to conversation in verse. The reason for the use of Urdu for the main part and free use of verse in conversation is perhaps this that the earliest drama of the theatrical type, namely 'Indar Sabha' also abounds in verse and its language is mainly Urdu. And since that earliest theatrical drama became exceedingly popular, later theatrical dramas also followed the same practice. Again, as in 'Indar Sabha' so in these plays also greater emphasis was usually laid on hilarious movements and gestures, on providing gorgeous dresses, variegated scenery and external glamour; their conversation used to be bombastic and heated (though powerful and strong also in certain cases) and they often suffered from the flaws of overacting. Again, the heroes and heroines of these plays easily stoop down to the level of quick, indiscreet lovers; even the great mythological characters, and heroes and heroines of the epics talk in no better way; for example we find Rama talking about Sita in Nazir's 'Ram-Lila Natak'—

'परमेश्वर ने क्या सूरत है संवारी,
सीता ने जिगर पै नैन कटारी मारी।
अलबेली बांकी तिरछी बिरछी चितवन
चलते में लचके कमर हिचकती कामन।।'

Much similar is the trend of talk between Lakshmi and Saraswati in 'Gangavataran' of Shri Krishna 'Hasrat';for instance, note the following words of Lakshmi addressed to Saraswati--

हंसके दिल लेना तुम्हें आता नहीं,
बोसा भी देना तुम्हें आता नहीं।

Another common feature of these plays is that they usually begin with the chorus; it is mostly of the nature of Nandi of Sanskrit plays, as in the choruses of these plays we generally find the praise of God or some popular deity. Further we find an abundance of songs in these plays in general, as we find their abundance in 'Indar -Sabha' the earliest theatrical drama. But their songs are not specimens of high class poetry or deep emotions; they have been written in a new style, popularly known as the 'theatrical style'.

In fact to a man of cultured and refined taste, the entire atmosphere of these plays seemed distasteful and degrading; it was this lack of art and the rush of frivolity and cheap entertainment of these theatres that shocked Bharatendu and his contemporaries, who tried to draw the public to their literary dramas.

This was the state of affairs in the Parsi theatres in the 19th century. And although in the twentieth century also their main features remained mostly the same, still they began to show some signs of improvement. First of all they overhauled their language; so far, Urdu was predominant on the Parsi stage; but in the twentieth century Narayan Prasad 'Betab' and Radha Shyam 'Kathavachak' introduced simple Hindi in these theatres; they wrote their plays (especially their mythological plays) in Hindi, where only a few simple Urdu words were used. This adoption of simple Hindi or Hindustani widened the circle of these plays; now more people began to understand them and take interest in them. Further we find that in the twentieth century themes began to be borrowed more frequently from Hindu mythology and epics than the romantic Persian tales; this switch-over from Persian tales to Hindu mythology was probably done in obedience to the popular demand and keeping in view the popular taste and tendency. As these theatres always looked to the financial gain, they gradually realised that Hindu masses revelled more in their epic and mythological themes; therefore, in order to provide them with what they liked most these Parsi theatres gave greater currency to mythological themes than before. Besides 'Kathavachak' and 'Betab', some other writers like Krishna Chandra 'Zeba', Tulsi Datt 'Shaida', Hari Krishna 'Jauhar' etc. adopted mythological and epic plots.

Soon the bioscope and the movies made their apperance in India; now their superior humour and melodramatic scenes, their captivating scenery and wonderful make-up of the stars produced deep effect on the minds of the spectators, who began to turn from the Parsi theatres to the bioscope. In order to fare well in the competition, the Parsi theatres also tried to introduce those very elements in their dramas which were making the bioscope more popular

In fact to a man of cultured and refined taste, the whole atmosphere of these plays seemed distasteful and degrading; it was their lack of art and the rule of vulgarity and cheap sentimentalism of these theatres that shocked the artists and the intelligentsia, who refused to [illegible] the public to their literary [illegible].

This was the state of affairs in the Parsi theatres in the 19th century. And although in the twentieth century also their main features remained mostly the same, still they began to make some signs of improvement. First of all they overhauled their language [illegible]. Urdu was predominant on the Parsi stage; but in the twentieth century certain writers 'Betab' and Radhe Shyam 'Kathavachak' introduced simple Hindi in these theatres; they wrote their plays (especially their mythological plays) in Hindi, where only a few simple Urdu words were used. This adoption of simple Hindi gradually widened the circle of these plays; now more people began to understand them and take interest in them. Further we find that in the twentieth century themes began to be borrowed more frequently from Hindu mythology and epics than the romantic Persian tales; and this change from Persian tales to Hindu mythology was probably done in obedience to the popular demand and keeping in view the popular taste and tendency. As these theatres always looked to the financial gain, they gradually realised that Hindu masses preferred [illegible] and mythological themes and characters. In order to [illegible] them [illegible] they liked most these [illegible] resorted to mythological themes than before. [illegible] 'Mahabharata' and 'Ramayan', some other writers [illegible] 'Sita', [illegible] 'Bhakt [illegible]', etc. [illegible] again [illegible].

Both the [illegible] and the [illegible] [illegible] their [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Accordingly, highly melodramatic and supernatural scenes began to frequent their plays, as, for example, we find in 'Bharat Darpan' of Krishna Chandra 'Zeba'—

[शब्द—दृश्य-परिवर्तन — एक बड़ा सा चर्खा दृष्टिगोचर होता है, चर्खा कठिन कृपाण के रूप में परिवर्तित हो जाता है। तलवार पर 'राष्ट्रीय अस्त्र' (कौमी तलवार) यह शब्द अंकित है। एक शब्द होता है और योरोपीय व्यापार एक राक्षस के रूप में प्रकट होता है। पुनः शब्द होता है और भारतमाता प्रवेश करती है। माता चर्खे के समान आकार वाले उसी कठिन कृपाण को लेकर तीव्रगति से राक्षस को दिखाती है। योरोपीय व्यापार नामधारी राक्षस का हृदय भयभीत और शरीर कंपित हो जाता है।]

Or again, in 'Vir Abhimanyu' of 'Kathavachak' we find—

(सीन बदलना। वृद्धक्षत्र का तपस्या करते हुए दिखाई देना, उसकी गोद में जयद्रथ का कटा हुआ शीस पहुंचना। वृद्धक्षत्र का उठना और उसके शीस का भी टुकड़े टुकड़े होकर फटना।")

Although Hindi Parsi theatrical playwrights could not provide the people with as beautiful and powerful scenes as the cinema gave them, still, by introducing scenes of the above nature, they tried to copy their model. In addition to such scenes, other supernatural elements, for example the appearance of a god or gods in the sky, or shower of flowers from heaven etc. began to be frequently repeated in theatrical plays. The natural effect of such supernatural and wonderful scenes was that the spectators were almost charmed by them; already they were mostly lacking in the power of discrimination between good and bad acting, and critically examining the subtler and finer points of beauty in a play; and whatever little sense of critical appreciation they possessed, even that they lost in the rush of supernatural and sensational scenes.

Another outstanding feature of the twentieth century theatrical plays was their novel introduction of the comic element. While occasional touches of boisterous and vulgar humour were found in the ninteenth century, a better adjustment was given to the comic in the twentieth century. According to the new schemes the playwrights began to introduce two independent plots in their dramas; both these plots ran side by side, one of them being serious and the other light and comic.[1] Agha Hashr Kashmiri was probably the first playwright who introduced the scheme of double plot in his plays.

1. Saxena: A History of Urdue Literature, page 358

From the point of view of art these comics were not very refined or cultured; but they provided the audience with relief from the serious plot and thus gave a variety of entertainment. It was soon found that the majority of specators liked the comic plot more than the serious; they went to the theatre chiefly for enjoying the comic plot of the drama, and sometimes even disliked the characters and events of the serious plot who stood in the way of their fun. So, this practice of double plot gradually became almost a rule and those playwrights who were incapable of writing the comic parts for their plays had to introduce some short farce alongside of their serious plot.

By and by gifted playwrights began to establish a link between the serious and the comic plot, instead of keeping the two apart. While Kathavachak and Hashr sought to interlink the two plots, Narayan Prasad 'Betab' went a step further; he did not introduce the comic by means of a second plot, but made the comic also a part of one and the same plot, and he incorporated the comic element in the speeches of various character of the main plot.

Recapitulating, we can say that although these plays made themselves extremely popular among numberless people for several decades of years, yet they did not rise to be good or great from the point of view of art and refinement. The express aim of these theatrical companies was to amass wealth, as is clear from the reply of the proprietor of a theatrical company quoted by Dr. Som Nath Gupta.[1] Accordingly these theatrical companies never cared to realise the significance of the artistic force and appeal of drama or to educate the crude taste of the masses; and in order to attract the largest number of spectators they would include all rot in their dramas that could appeal to the low taste of the masses.

But these theatrical companies, at the same time, gave us a very useful thing also — a thing that we needed most — i.e. the stage. Before them, Ras-Lila and Nautankis had a stage no doubt, but their stage was of a very simple and unscientific nature. These companies,

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1. Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas, 2nd edition, page 153.

2. See Chapter II above.

on the other hand, gave us a scientific stage which they had borrowed from the European theatres that existed in India before the dawn of the Parsi Theatrical Companies. Moreover, while these theatrical companies can be held responsible to a certain extent, for keeping the popular taste low and uneducated, they also deserve the credit of patronising so many playwrights; it was the popularity of these theatrical companies that attracted these playwrights to them; otherwise some of these playwrights might have followed some other profession while a few of them might have perhaps turned to be the followers of Bharatendu school. Infact, if the Parsi theatrical playwrights had tried to rise above their atmosphere of cheap entertainment and lack of culture and refinement, or if the literary playwrights of the Bharatendu school ever cared to cater to the popular demand, to some extent, alongside of their scruples about art and refinement, the result would have been a splendid one.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DECLINE OF HINDI DRAMA.

In the foregoing chapters we have seen that although Hindi drama rose at a very belated time, yet it made rapid progress after its rise. Bharatendu himself wrote original plays of so many kinds besides translating others; and the dramatic tradition set up by him was promptly carried on by several other writers, and quite a rush of playwrights appeared soon after Bharatendu as we have shown in Chapters VI and VII.

But as in the days of Bharatendu Hindi drama rose with great speed, in a similar way it speedily delined after the death of that celebrated writer. In fact from 1885 to 1912 we come across very few original plays of genuine merit; a few excellent plays like 'Maharana Pratap' (1897) of Radha Krishna Das no doubt appeared during this period; but even here we find that their authors were, in fact, contemporaries of Bharatendu, whose literary career, however, continued for a few years later than Bharatendu. In the same way do not even come across a large number of plays translated from Sanskrit, Bengali and English during this period.

Referring to this decline of Hindi drama, Kishori Lal Goswami writes in his 'Chaupat Chapet' in 1891—

"हिन्दी के अभाग्यवश जब से भारतेन्दु बाबू हरिश्चन्द्र जी परलोक सिधारे हैं तबसे साहित्य की बड़ी दुर्दशा हो रही है। गद्य तो जो है सो हई है पर पद्य की दशा ऐसी भयानक हो रही है कि देखते ही शरीर कांप उठता है बहुत से मूर्खाधिराज कविता का श्राद्ध करने पर उतारू भये हैं, अस्तु और नाटकविद्या को तो कदाचित बाबू साहब अपने संग ही ले गये हैं, उनके पीछे दो एक रूपक कि जिनसे घण्टा भर जी लगे, छोड़ के और आज तक नाटक नहीं बने जिससे हिन्दी भाषा की पुष्टि होय, यह अभाग्य नहीं तो क्या है?"

In 'Mayank-Manjari' (1891) the same author again deplores the decline of Hindi drama—

"जिस देश में इस विद्या का प्रथम २ प्रचार भया, और संगीत-साहित्य परिपक्व

होकर पृथ्वी भर में व्याप गये, आज वहां के निवासी नाटक का नाम तक नहीं जानते, यदि है तो इन्द्र-सभा पारसियों के शतरंजी मशाल वाले भ्रष्ट खेल ही पर नाटकों की इति है, लिखना तो दूर रहै, जो नाटक रचै, या अभिनय करे, वह हास्यास्पद गिना जाता है।"

Rightly speaking, it was Bharatendu who was responsible for the rise of Hindi drama. Hindi drama might have taken longer to rise, had not the extraordinary and untiring genius of Bharatendu appeared at that time. For the purpose of popularising and encouraging Hindi drama Bharatendu established the Hindi stage also, borrowing it from the Parsi theatres, and infused life into it by personally taking active part in the performance of plays.

But while Bharatendu was really great as a genius, playwright and actor, most of his successors, unfortunately, happened to be much weaker than him. With the exception of Shri Niwas Das, Radha Krishna Das, Bal Krishna Bhatta and one or two other playwrights, none of the contemporaries or successors of Bharatendu (during the ninteenth century) was a man of strong calibre, high genius and dramatic talents as we have shown in Chapters VI and VII. And that was particularly the critical time when great playwrights and geniuses were needed; because we have seen that Parsi theatrical plays were getting very popular in the last quarter of the ninteenth century. Great writers and gifted playwrights alone could have succeeded in competing well with the Parsi theatres, and weaning the audience from their inartistic but amusing dramas. But the successors of Bharatendu mostly lacked this power, so that Parsi theatres overpowered the literary plays of Bharatendu's successors. Nor did the successors of Bharatendu paid much attention to the stage and its regular working; on the other hand Parsi theatres had a scientific stage which regularly and actively infused life and glamour in their theatrical plays by performing them before the audience. This advantage of Parsi theatrical plays swiftly weaned the people from literary plays.

Thus we find that the greatest blow to Hindi drama was really dealt by the Parsi theatrical dramas. Unfortunately, the popular taste in the ninteenth century was very rude and unaesthetic and it loved frivolity and cheap fun. And the Parsi theatres carefully provided the public with all sorts of entertainment that they

wanted, as we have shown in the last chapter. However distasteful, cheap and inartistic the Parsi theatrical plays appeared to learned men of refined taste, the general public had a strong liking for those plays. Thus the great popularity of theatrical plays left little audience for literary dramas which mostly disregarded public taste and entertainment.

Not only that no audience was left for literary Hindi drama; one can rightly presume that playwrights themselves must have been struck by the dazzling success and roaring business of the Parsi theatres. Naturally, many of the playwrights, instead of boldly fighting the Parsi competition and strongly keeping up the tradition of literary drama, might have dropped the idea of literary dramas, which brought them little fame and money and would have joined the Parsi theatres where they could gain ample popularity and money. Those playwrights who were avowed to the cause of literary drama may not have been effected by the roaring business of the Parsi theatres; but others, especially the budding playwrights would have been certainly tempted by the popularity of theatrical plays.

The following analogy will make the above point more clear Till recently the number of people studying Hindi was much less than those learning English; the chief reason was that the people knew that the same amount of time, energy and money spent on learning or getting degress in English would pay them much more than their learning Hindi, as English was required for all government services and not Hindi. Consequently Hindi was thrown in the back-ground and even those who would have otherwise loved or liked Hindi, could not devote themselves to Hindi because it could not bring them that much money and livelihood as English could. The same state of affairs we find in drama too; when the theatrical plays became very popular, the budding playwrights were naturally drawn to that stage to earn more money and name than to literary dramas which might have been liked or patronised by only a limited class of people. Had not the Parsi theatrical plays been so very popular, we can well imagine that several gifted theatrical playwrights like 'Katavachak', 'Betab', 'Hasrat', 'Zeba' etc.

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cheap and [illegible] the Parsi theatrical plays appeared to [illegible]
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The following analogy will make the above point more clear.
Till recently, the number of people [illegible] was much less
[illegible]

[illegible]

might have turned their attention to literary drama, and would have proved assets to that drama. In this way we can say that not only that the audience gradually went on diminishing for literary drama, the popularity of Parsi drama prevailed upon the playwrights too.

Moreover, in the closing quarter of the ninteenth century a spirit of awakening swept through the whole of the country. The principles and preachings of the Indian National Congress and the Arya Samaj influenced everybody, especially the educated class, who found the country groaning under the heavy burden of various social, political and religious evils. Consequently, the playwrights, who were equally influenced by contemporary movements and conditions, tried to seek the remedy of those evils through the medium of drama. They looked upon drama as an effective instrument for raising voice against these evils, and solving the political, economic and religious problems of the day. But the influence of contemporary conditions was so strong in their mind, that even when writing plays, they could not keep it aside; consequently, their plays, instead of remaining purely and strictly literary works written for the sake of art, were made a means of propaganda and reform, intentionally or otherwise.

Doubtless, the aim of these playwrights who sought to discuss contemporary problems and conditions through the medium of drama was not bad; Bharatendu himself had set before them the example of dealing with contemporary problems in drama. But while Bharatendu possessed that great genius which is essential for this task, other playwrights who followed his lead in this respect generally lacked that dramatic skill and keen sense of propriety, and so their works fell short of their aim. Their zeal of discussing contemporary problems and evils in their dramas overpowered their power of attending properly to plot-construction, characterisation etc. Consequently, while these playwrights succeeded in their reformist role, they greatly harmed the cause of standard literary drama by neglecting the artistic side of drama in their enthusiasm to preach for or against different prevalent customs. In their dramas, therefore, we find the playwrights themselves speaking in the person of their characters, as if sermonising and preaching

from the platform of reform; this greatly lowered the artistic standard of literary drama and resulted in its downfall.

Moreover, contact with the West became more close and clear in these years. Mysteries of the West were disclosing themselves to the people day by day. Every day, people were receiving new ideas, and learning new things from the West. The rush of Western ideas, Western education, culture and civilization resulted in a mental unrest and confusion for the people for some years. People's power of adaptation and imbibing fresh material could not keep pace with the onrush of imported matter. Consequently, their integrity of thought was shaken, and it took them a number of years to intellectually settle down once again, after imbibing all that they had learnt from the West, and accepting a combination of the Eastern and Western idealogies and cultures. They could not make any concrete or concentrated effort in literature in general, much less in drama, although stray pieces of art appeared from time to time.

And we find that once the people had overcome their mental unrest, they made a steady progress in drama, and from 1912 onwards we find the branch of Hindi drama ever in bloom.

CHAPTER IX

TECHNIQUE OF NINTEENTH CENTURY HINDI DRAMA.

As we have already said, the dramas of Bharatendu school were written in a spirit of reaction against the cheap, inartistic Parsi theatrical plays and with an object of reviving the tradition of literary drama. Accordingly, the leading treatises on Sanskrit dramaturgy were studied by Bharatendu, and a lot was borrowed from that art. But alongside of following various canons and conventions of classical dramá, Bharatendu and his contemporaries also received the contemporary influence of their contact with Western ideas, education and culture. Consequently Bharatendu and his followers wisely adopted a middle course between the classical and Western techniques; they accepted those injunctions of Bharat which could suit the changed atmosphere and conditions and which were not repulsive to the learned taste of their own times;[1] in addition to this they also borrowed from the West all that was necessary, useful and in tune with Indian atmosphere.

So, broadly speaking, the technique of ninteenth century Hindi drama was fashioned after two different models, namely the classical and the Western; a few of the plays (e.g. 'Shri Chandravali', 'Nil Devi' etc.)[2] betray some influence of medieval types of performances also, but that influence is neither abundant nor penetrating. The technique of Parsi theatrical dramas was based neither strictly on the classical nor the Western models. Their technique can be called the 'popular' technique in so far as it was in complete conformity with the popular demand and taste, which it best tried to cater to.

1. 'Natak'; 'Bharatendu Natakavali', edited by Braj Ratna Das Vol. II page 431.
2. See page 48 above.

According to classical conventions, every drama usually begins with the 'Nandi' or the 'Benedictory Verse', invoking the blessings and favour of some deity.[1] Firstly the origin of drama in India is religious; moreover ancient Indian people believed in the significance, sanctity and strength of Dharma; so, in all matters they looked upon it as their foremost duty to remember God or pray Him for His blessings and bounties. But in the second half of the ninteenth century, God and religion were steadily retiring to the background, much under the influence of Western education and thoughts; moreover, there was no benediction or prayer of the type of Nandi attached to English dramas. Therefore, due to these reasons our Hindi playwrights of the ninteenth century have not been very scruplous about giving Nandi in their plays; in some of them they have dropped Nandi under the influence of Western drama, while in others they have retained the Nandi according to classical practice; in this way we find that while Nandi has been given in plays like Bharatendu's 'Satya-Harishchandra', 'Shri Chandravali', 'Prem Jogini' Radha Krishna Das's 'Maharana Pratap' 'Padmavati', Shri Niwas Das's 'Tapta-Samvarana' etc. it has been dropped in other plays like 'Nil Devi' of Bharatendu, 'Dukhini Bala' of Radha Krishna Das, 'Randhir Aur Prem-Mohini' of Shri Niwas Das, in 'Sajjad Sumbul' and 'Shamshad Sausan' of Keshav Ram Bhatta etc.

After Nandi begins the 'Prastavana' or the 'prologue'. Than 'Nandi', 'Prastavana' was a more significant and useful part of the drama; by means of this Prastavana generally, the playwright would introduce himself to the audience, would also make a reference to the name of the play and the plot in hand. In classical drama great attention was paid to 'Rasa'[2] or the sentiment as drama was considered to be a part of Kavya; and in order to help the spectators in properly enjoying the sentiment, it was helpful that the theme of the play should be hinted at in the beginning. But the conditions had changed in the late ninteenth century; some playwrights started the practice of writing 'Introductions' to their plays (e.g. 'Maharana Pratap' of Radha Krishna Das) in which re-

1. Keith, Sanskrit Drama; pages 36-48.
2. Ibid. pages 276 to 282 and 314.

flections about the plot etc. were cast. Also with the introduction of the lithographic press, printing became cheap;[1] handbills containing the synopsis of the play and giving the names etc. of the play, playwright and characters used to be distributed before or at the time of the performance. This served the purpose of the classical 'Prastavana'.

Moreover, the chief aim of drama in this period shifted, to a great extent, from sentiment to story-interest;[2] this rendered the Prastavana useless. The charm of the plot and story interest will be greatly diminished if the audience was given an inkling into it beforehand. Opinions may differ here and some people may think that the previous knowledge of the plot adds to the charm and interest of the performance, yet we strongly believe that the previous knowledge of the plot will diminish the charm, unless the object of drama is other than story-interest.

As in the case of Nandi, so in the case of Prastavana too we find that several plays begin with the Prastavana, while in others it has been dropped. Thus we find the Prastavana in Bharatendu's 'Satya-Harishchandra', 'Shri Chandravali', and 'Prem Jogini', Radha Krishna Das's 'Maharana Pratap', Shri Niwas Das's 'Sanyogita-Svayamvar' and several other plays, while it has been dropped in plays like Bharatendu's 'Nil Devi' and Shri Niwas Das's 'Randhir Aur Prem Mohini' etc.

According to classical rules, a Natak could have five to ten acts;[3] the usual number of acts was seven, and 'Shakuntala', 'Uttara-rama-charita' and 'Mudra-Rakshasa' —— the three leading plays of Sanskrit —— have seven acts each. 'Veni-Samhara' has six, while 'Mricchakatika', being a Maha Nataka has ten acts. In the period in question this rule about the number of acts has been mostly violated; we find hardly any plays of seven acts; otherwise the number of acts is generally five, four or even three in certain cases.

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1. 'Natak': Bharatendu Natakavali edited by Braj Ratna Das, Vol.II page 441-442.
2. Dr. Varshney: Adhnik Hindi Sahitya; page 256.
3. Keith: Sanskrit Drama; page 345.

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tion of the lithographic press, printing became cheap, handbills
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[illegible]'s '[illegible]', '[illegible]', and '[illegible]
[illegible]', '[illegible]', '[illegible]', [illegible]
'[illegible]-svayamvar' and several other plays, while it has been
dropped in plays like [illegible]'s '[illegible]' and [illegible]
'[illegible]' etc.

Again, as [illegible] plays, a [illegible]
[illegible] the usual number of acts was seven, and '[illegible]',
'[illegible]' and '[illegible]' — [illegible]
plays of [illegible] — [illegible] acts. '[illegible]'
while '[illegible]', [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]

1. [illegible]
2. [illegible]

In Sanskrit drama acts were not divided into scenes; it was so, because their chief aim being to evoke[1] a particular sentiment in the minds of the audience. They had to maintain a permanent feeling and a prolonged atmosphere (which would help in the production of one sentiment); for this reason quick transfer of scenes was neither helpful nor desirable. But as the chief aim of drama was steadily shifting to story-interest in this period, quick trans-fer of scenes became useful and even essential. Moreover the dramas of the West were also divided into scenes. So, due to these reasons our playwrights also gradually developed the habit of dividing acts into scenes; But it is only in a few cases that the playwrights of this period have divided their acts into scenes;(e.g. Randhir Aur Prem Mohini', 'Maharana Pratap' etc.); otherwise the classical influence mostly prevailed and in greater number of cases we find the acts not subdivided into scenes (e.g. Bharatendu's 'Satya Harischandra', 'Shri Chandravali' 'Bharat-Durdasha' etc.

As we have pointed out at different places in Chapter V, VI and VII, these plays have an abundance of soliloquies and 'asides', and in several cases the soliloquies are very lengthy and boring; even Bharatendu's plays are not free from the fault of lengthy soliloquies. In dialogue proper, i.e. conversation between two or more characters, most of the playwrights of this period have not been shown much skill nor do they appear to have properly understood the significance of dialogue. With the exception of Bharatendu, Radha Krishna Das, Shri Niwas Das, Bal Krishna Bhatta, very few playwrights have been able to make their dialogue freeful and lively and an effective means of character-painting or plot-development. Sometimes their speeches are very lengthy and undramatic; on others they have nothing to do with the main plot.

Another important feature of the dialogue of this period is the frequent use of verse in course of conversation. It is true that the use of verse is common in Sanskrit plays; but poetry in Sanskrit plays is not merely verse; it is possessed of poetic beauty and charm and is full of sentiment and significance, as

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1. Keith, Sanskrit Drama; page 314.

we can easily judge from the verses used in the 'Shakuntala' and the 'Uttara-rama-charita'. But the Hindi playwrights of the ninteenth century resort to the use of verse on all occasions without distinction, and their frequent and often inartistic use of verse looks undramatic and cheap. In fact the Hindi playwrights do not appear to have inherited this tendency from classical drama, but have borrowed it from Parsi theatrical dramas, as their use of verse mostly resembles the cheap practice of Parsi plays in its impropriety and not the poetical and artistic practice of Sanskrit drama. Even in the works of playwrights like Bharatendu verse has been freely used, but in their case the use of verse is sometimes not so useless, absurd and inappropriate as in the case of lesser playwrights.

Another feature of the diction of some of the plays of the ninteenth century is the use of different dialects by different characters. In Sanskrit drama also we find that while the kings and countries, commanders and ministers, Brahmans and other educated or high-born male characters speak Sanskrit, the female members including even the queens and princesses and low-class male characters (and even the Brahman Vidushaka) use Prakrits for conversation. Parsi theatres did not observe any differentiation of dialects of this kind, and all their characters, male or female, high or low use one language, which is mostly Hindustani. But some of the literary playwrights of this period have followed the example of classical drama, and so in several plays we find different characters speaking different languages and dialects. In 'Maharana Pratap' of Radha Krishna Das Muslim characters speak Urdu as can be seen from the two speeches of Akbar quoted on page 63. Hindu characters speak Hindi as is clear from the conversation of Pratap and his comrades. And the Portugese character uses a strange mixture of Portugese Hindi and Urdu, as —

पोर्तुगीज़ — खोदावंद अम पोर्तुगीज़ हैं, अमारा नाम अगस्टाइन है (अमारा गोआ) के गवर्नर ने अमको हुज़ूर के लिये बहुत सा नज़र लेकर भेजा ठा, राह में उदयपुर के राजा ने अमको लूट लिया, बोला अमारे सिवाय बादशाह कौन है, यह नज़र अमारा है। (Act IV scene 3)

Again in 'Randhir- Prem Mohini' of Shri Niwas Das some characters use the local dialects as in the following—

नत्थूराम — (कुछ तेज़ होकर) अन्दाताजी, या बात आपका फ़र्मावा लायक नहीं है,

we can easily judge from the verses given. The 'Chandrakala' and the 'Uttara-rama-charita'. That the Hindi playwrights of the nineteenth century resort to the use of verse on all occasions without discrimination, and their frequent and often inartistic use of verse looks undramatic and absurd. In fact the Hindi playwrights do not appear to have inherited this tendency from classical drama, but have borrowed it from Parsi theatrical drama, as their use of verse mostly resembles the chorus function of Parsi plays in its impropriety and not the occasional and artistic practice of Sanskrit drama. Even in the works of playwrights like Bharatendu verse has been freely used, but in their case the use of verse is sometimes not so useless, absurd and inappropriate, as is the case of lesser playwrights.

Another noteworthy feature of the diction of some of the plays of the nineteenth century is the use of different dialects by different characters. In Sanskrit drama also we find that while the kings and Brahmins, commanders and ministers, speak Sanskrit, the female members or high-born male characters speak Prakrit, [illegible] including even the queens and princesses and low and menial characters and even the Vidushaka [illegible] use Prakrit for conversation. [illegible] did not [illegible] any differentiation of dialects of this kind, and all their characters, male or female, high or low use one language, which is mostly Khariboli. But some of the Hindi playwrights of this period have followed the example of classical drama, and so in several plays we find different characters speaking different languages and dialects. In [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] as can be seen from the [illegible] speeches of [illegible] quoted on page 63. [illegible] characters [illegible] as it is clear from the conversation of [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] characters use a strange mixture of [illegible] and Urdu, as —

[illegible]

[illegible]

गांव गोठांरा बोरा मैं कोई धरम हार इश्या काम भला ही करलो, म्हे लोग मरता मर-जाश्यां तो पण म्हासै खोटो कणाद कदे नहीं बणायो जासी etc.

(Act I Scene 3).

In the same way in 'Prabhas Milan' of Baldev Prasad Mishra, Krishna, Vasudev, Nand etc. speak in 'Khari Boli', while Radha, Yashoda, cowherds and milk-maids talk in Braj Bhasha. Bharatendu also has used local or provincial dialects in his 'Prem Jogini' in the fifth act of 'Bharat Durdasha' etc. But this scheme of different dialects has not been followed by several playwrights and even in some of the plays Bharatendu (e.g. 'Satya-Harischandra') only one language has been used for prose.

In classical dramaturgy, demonstration of certain scenes and actions is banned for the stage. Scenes of battle, death, bathing, kissing, embracing etc. were not allowed to be shown on the stage, perhaps because they looked repulsive to the refined and cultured taste of the audience of those times. Most of the playwrights of this period have not dared to go against these classical injunctions; but in certain cases these tabooes have been violated: for instance, in 'Mayank-Manjari' of Kishori Lal Goswami, we find the scenes of kissing and death, and in Bharatendu's 'Nil Devi' the murder of Abdul Sharif at the hands of Nil Devi is also shown on the stage; in 'Randhir Aur Prem Mohini' also the death of Randhir and Prem Mohini is shown on the stage.

Again, classical plays were comedies as a rule, and the playwrights of the ninteenth century have also followed this rule in general. But in a few cases the playwrights have made bold to produce tragedies also. Perhaps they borrowed the idea of writing tragedies from Western literature or from their own experience and observation of life. Shri Niwas Das was the first playwright who wrote tragedy ('Randhir Aur Prem Mohini' 1877) in Hindi drama; like-wise Bharatendu's 'Nil Devi' (1880) has also a tragic ending. But the number of tragedies, when compared with the plays with a happy ending, is very small which shows the dominance of classical influence.

The atmosphere of Sanskrit plays used to be idealistic;[1] they had a strong ethical background, and they always depicted the victory of virtue[2] over evil. Their heroes are essentially ideal, flawless and infallible;[3] they do not sublimate themselves from the ordinary human level to extraordinary human heights, but are already seated on that high pedestal. In Hindi drama this thing underwent a great change, partly due to Western influence and partly due to changed ethical standard of the people. With the exception of mythological plays the characters of other plays began to be ordinary men of the world, liable to go wrong like common human beings. Further, while in classical drama the characters were mostly high-born and used to be selected from a very narrow circle, in this period all types of characters began to find place in drama.[4] This made the atmosphere of dramas more realistic and worldly than that of Sanskrit plays.

From the point of view of plot and subject-matter also we find that the classical plays used to be mostly romantic or mythological; in most of them the superhuman and the super-natural element was also present (e.g. 'Shakuntala', 'Uttara-rama-charita' etc But in the ninteenth century, playwrights began to select their themes from all contemporary topics in addition to sticking merely to mythological and romantic themes.[5] They began to write plays on political, social, religious, historical and other popular topics. New types of plays like 'Bharat Janani' (which is an opera) began to be written under the influence of Western and Bengali literatures. The farces of this period made a departure from the classical 'Prahasanas'; the classical 'Prahasanas' were meant solely for fun and were not to deal with social or political problems[6] in a spirit of reformation; but the Hindi farces of this period aimed at satirising various evils, besides producing humour.

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1. Keith : Sanskrit Drama page 276-282.
2. Ibid.
3. Keith Sanskrit Drama; pages 276-282
4. See page 49 above.
5. See Chapters IV, V & VI above.
6. See page 76 above.

To recapitulate we can say that although our playwrights were gradually coming under the influence of Western drama and were also being effected by contemporary atmosphere and conditions; still they clung to the classical technique to a great extent. At the same time we have to admit that although classical influence is predominant in these plays, we can hardly find any play which is totally free from all non-classical impression and is written exclusively on classical lines.

HINDI DRAMA IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

CHAPTER X.

HINDI DRAMA IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

The First Phase (1900-1912).

After the death of Bharatendu Hindi drama rapidly declined. For this decline of Hindi drama several reasons can be brought forward, and some of them have been discussed in Chapter VIII. The reasons that brought about the downfall of Hindi drama in the closing years of the ninteenth century, were still, to some extent, in force during the first two decades of the twentieth century. As a result we find that the sterile period of Hindi drama begins shortly after the death of Bharatendu and continues upto 1912 (and even a few years later) the year in which the revival of Hindi drama began and in which literary Hindi plays of notable worth began to appear. In 1912 appeared Badri Nath Bhatta's 'Kuru-van-dahan' which marks a bold advance over Hindi plays of the sterile period, as we shall show just now; the literary dramas of Jay Shankar Prasad also began to appear about the same year, and his 'Karunalay' (which is although a poor attempt if compared with later and maturer plays of Prasad) appeared in 1912. Regarding the sterile period we find that although a number of original plays did appear during this period, still very few of them possess any considerable merit.

Besides original plays, we come across a number of translations from Sanskrit, Bengali and English; in fact the chain of translations never broke in Hindi drama right from Bharatendu till today. Bharatendu himself translated a number of plays from different languages and his contemporaries and successors carried on this tradition with enthusiasm and care.[1] In the sterile period also we come across

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1. For Translations of the ninteenth century, please see Chapter VI.

a number of translations, of which we find almost a rush in the next period (1912-1930).

Original Plays.

Before dealing with other original plays of this period we may point out one important fact that some of the plays actually written in this period have been dealt with earlier in Chapter V and VI; the reason for doing so is that the writers of these plays mainly belong to the ninteenth century, and they spent the major portion of their literary career in that century; however, their last dramatic compositions fall in this period. Some plays of such authors which have been discussed earlier are 'Natya-Sambhav' (1904) of Kishori Lal Goswami, 'Prayag-Ramagaman' (1904) of Badri Narayan Chaudhri 'Premghan', 'Shri Dama Natak' (1904) of Radha Charan Goswami, 'Bharat -Durdasha' (1902) of Pratap Narayan Mishra, 'Prabhas-Milan' (1903) of Baldev Prasad Mishra, 'Puru-Vikram' (1906) of Shaligram etc.etc.[1]

Then we find 'Anargh-Nal' (1908) of Sudarshanacharya, a Panjabi playwright; it is a huge play having ten acts, and it deals with the story of Damayanti's marriage with Nala, their subsequent exile, separation and reunion. Several Sanskrit shlokas have been spread here and there in the play, and the work does not possess much merit.

Better than the above play is 'Ramabhishek' (1910) of Ganga Prasad; this play does not refer to Rama's coronation after his return from exile; on the other hand it deals with Rama's proposed coro-nation in the life-time of Dashratha, and ends with the death of the latter. In this play we find a combination of the tendencies of the literary drama as well as the Parsi theatrical drama; the construction of the plot is quite careful and the atmosphere of the play is mostly purged of the frivolities of the Parsi theatrical plays; but, like the theatrical plays it has an abundance of musical element and even Rama and Sita indulge in singing on several occasions.

Some of the other plays based on the Ramayana are 'Ram-Lila'

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1. All these plays have been discussed in Chapter V.

(1908) of Braj Chand, 'Ram-van-Yatra' (1910) of Girdhar Lal, 'Ram-Lila Natak' (1911) of Narayan Sahai, 'Dhanush-Yajna-Lila' (1912) of Ram Ghulam Lal etc. etc. All these are very minor compositions from dramatic point of view and seem to have been written for the purpose of Ram-Lila.

Equally insignificant are plays like 'Nal-Damayanti' (1905) of Mahavir Sinh, 'Abhimanyu-Vadh' (1906) of Gaur Charan Goswami, 'Urvashi' of Lakshmi Prasad, 'Sudama Natak' (1907) of Shiv Nandan Sahai, 'Uddhav' (1909) of Braj Nandan Sahai, 'Kans-Vadh' (1910) of Ram Narayan Mishra, 'Rupvati' (1907) of Parameshvar Mishra, 'Kamini Kusum' (1907) of Harinarayan; they have little dramatic worth and beauty; of these the last-named is mostly an adaptation of Bharatendu 'Vidya-Sundar'.

Another original drama of this period is 'Chandra-Kala Bhanu Kumar' (1904) of Rai Devi Prasad Purna; the huge size of the play makes it unfit for the stage, and the author has himself admitted in the introduction that he wrote the play for the purpose of reading. The play abounds in verse and the playwright has not shown much skill in plot-construction or characterisation.

Translations.

Very few plays were translated from other languages during this period, although in the next period (1912-1930), we find almost a flood of them. Besides Sadanand Avasthi's translation of the 'Naganand' (1906) Rai Bahadur L. Sita Ram translated several plays from Sanskrit;[1] but most of these translations were done in the ninteenth century; in 1913 appeared his translation of Shudraka's 'Mrichchhakatika', and the same year appeared Satya Narayan's translation of Bhavabhuti's 'Uttara-Rama-Charita'. L. Sita Ram also translated about a dozen plays of Shakespeare; of these, only one play 'Man Mohan Ka Jal' which is the translation of Shakespeare's 'Much Ado About Nothing', appeared in 1912, while other translations appeared in the next period and have been discussed in a succeeding chapter.

1. See page 81 above.

One or two plays were translated from Bengali also. Braj Nandan Sahai's translations 'Saptam-Pratima' (1906) and 'Budha Var' (1909) are very interesting and successful. Besides, Gopal Ram Gahmari wrote 'Banbir Natak' (1912) on the basis of a Bengali drama; the theme of this play is the great sacrifice of that Rajput nurse Panna who saved the life of her baby-master Uday Sinha from Rana Banbir, and sacrificed her own beloved son in his stead. In this play the comic has been mingled with the pathetic, the heroic and the dreadful sentiments; on the whole, the play is quite a successful attempt of Gahmari.

Revival of Hindi Drama.

But the two more important plays of this period (1900-1912) are Prasad's 'Karunalaya' (1912) and Badri Nath Bhatta's 'Kuru-Van-Dahan' (1912). 'Karunalaya' is a lyrical drama and deals with the story of Harischandra; this play has been discussed in Chapter XXII below. More important than 'Karunalaya' is Bhatta's 'Kuru-Van-Dahan' as it introduces a new era of dramatic art in Hindi literature, and marks the revival of Hindi drama after the sterile period. This play is, in various ways, an improvement upon the Hindi plays of the ninteenth century; and it also serves as a link between the plays of the past century and of the next period (1912-30). Bharatendu's genius nicely displayed the beauty of plot in 'Nil-Devi', of music in 'Bharat-Janani', of characterisation in 'Satya-Harish-Chandra', of a profuse flow of sentiment in 'Shri Chandravali', of humour in 'Andher- Nagari'; but while each of these plays excels in one quality or the other, all or most of these qualities are not to be found together in any one of these plays.[1] This ideal was, to a great extent, achieved by Badri Nath Bhatta in his 'Kuru-Van-Dahan'. In this play the playwright has achieved good success in plot-construction, has displayed adequate power of characterisation, forceful dialogue together with occasional touches of sprightly humour.

'Kuru-Van-Dahan' is an adaptation of Bhatta Narayan's 'Veni-Samhara'; in the foreword Bhatta writes—

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1. Dr. Shri Krishna Lal: Adhunik Hindi Sahitya Ka Vikas ; page 213

"Instead, I resolved to try another course which, I hoped, would allow me more freedom to my pen, that is, of remodelling it. The present work is the result of that attempt. I have completed it in seven acts, instead of six, and have tried to make it suit the modern taste and conditions, as far as possible, by means of various additions, omissions and alterations in the speeches of the Dramatis personae. I have even introduced some new characters together with humourous dialogue, wherever I thought it necessary. In fact, I have tried to make this work a type of combination of English and Sanskrit dramaturgy"--- etc.

So we find that in addition to the qualities of plot- construction, characterisation and humour, 'Kuru-Van-Dahan' is the first serious attempt at adapting it to modern taste and conditions, by making numerous additions, alterations and subtractions in dialogue, scenes and characters. Before this attempt we come across only translations of Sanskrit plays; they may be free translations or literal ones. Bhatta, on the other hand, has made it a combination of the Sanskrit and English dramaturgy, as he himself has said. While the original Sanskrit play is only divided in acts, with no sub-division into scenes, Bhatta has sub-divided his acts into scenes in imitation of Western drama. Besides this, the influence of Parsi theatrical plays is evident from the use of words 'Act' and 'Scene' in this play in place of Hindi words 'Anka' and 'Drishya'. Again, although there is abundant verse in the original Sanskrit play also, but Bhatta's versification betrays Parsi theatrical influence again in its rhyming couplets and general impression of verse; e.g.

सहदेव-(क्रोध से) भैय्या! मेल मेल की बात सब, धर्मराज का खेल,
कुटिल कौरवों से कभी, हम न करेंगे मेल। etc.

(Act I Scene 1).

Moreover, we witness a more balanced and artistic distribution and direction of the plot in this play; less important scenes have been disposed of in shorter space, while adequate length has been given to those scenes that enhance the dramatic effect; for instance, in 'Kuru-Van-Dahan' Bhishma's death has been informed in a small scene in course of conversation of two ordinary characters

(Act III -Scene I), while Jayadrath's death has been described in a detailed dramatic conversation (Act II Scene 5, Act III Scene I).

The dialogues of this play are also very lively, foreful and strong; they have been skilfully used as a means of the development of the plot. The plot moves on by means of conversation, and several important events (especially battle-scenes) have been informed in course of conversation instead of actually showing them on the stage. The play has also plenty of humour, which is sometimes introduced in the midst of serious speeches; e.g.

पहिला – अब अर्जुन ने प्रतिज्ञा की है कि जयद्रथ को बिना मारे नहीं छोड़ूंगा।
दूसरा – करने दो, अपनी क्या हानि है? हम कोई जयद्रथ थोड़ा ही हैं जो डरें, मेरी तो, भैय्या कपड़े की दुकान है।
पहिला – और अर्जुन के रसोइये ने प्रतिज्ञा की है कि जितने लावारसी गधे, घोड़े या ऊंट मिलेंगे उन सब का सत्यानाश करूंगा।
दूसरा – ओहो!
पहिला – सो भाई, इसीलिये मैं भाग आया हूं कि कहीं मुझे कोई गधा, घोड़ा या ऊंट न समझ ले, क्योंकि क्रोध में मनुष्य को कुछ का कुछ सूझता है। etc.

(Act II Scene 1)

This play is also fit for stage-performance, as battle-scenes have not been shown on the stage but have been conveyed in course of dialogue.

But while 'Kuru-Van-Dahan' is possessed of so many merits, it has its own defects also. We have already said that this play is a connecting link between the plays of the ninteenth century and those of the succeeding period; therefore it does not possess all the merits that the plays of the following periods (e.g. those of Prasad etc.) possess. In 'Kuru-Van-Dahan' we find that the author has not succeeded in presenting a realistic atmosphere of the times of Mahabharata; firstly he has not used the language appropriate to those ~~thing;~~ times; he has used even Urdu and English words at several places, which is absolutely anachronistic –

कंचुकी – ....जैसा कि कोई पांच रुपये महीने का रंगरूट चपरासी, और सच कहता हूं कि महल में मेरा ही सा सब का हाल है।

(Act II Scene 2)

or, बुद्धिप्रकाश – देखिये, आपके हाथ में बकस है इससे प्रत्यक्ष है कि आप मलाई की बर्फ़ बेचते हैं; ....और आपके हाथ में कुछ औज़ार हैं इससे विदित होता है कि आप मौक़ा आने पर बढ़ई का काम करने से भी पीछे नहीं हटते etc.-etc. (Act III Scene I)

In addition to the use of such anachronistic words, the general atmosphere and the trend of talk in this play does not proper -ly reflect the epic times; references to the following things in course of conversation, e.g.

बुद्धिप्रकाश – (आँखों से दिखाकर) वह तो रहा कुरुक्षेत्र – वहां क्या मुर्गे लड़ रहे हैं कि जिनका आप इलाज करने गये थे......

बुद्धिप्रकाश – पर यह तो बतलाइये कि लड़ाई में किसका बटेर अच्छा लड़ा।

(Act III-Scene 1)

may reflect the medieval Indian Moghul atmosphere, but not the atmosphere of those times with which it deals.

Again there is too much of verification in this drama; further, the author has given too many 'asides' and soliloquies[1] in this play; as this work is only an adaptation, he could have cut down their number and length in order to make the play suitable to modern taste and principles. Moreover, while most of the scenes of this play are quite reasonably short, a few of them (e.g. Act III Scene I and Scene 2; Act IV, Scene 2;) have become very lengthy; these abnor -mally lengthy scenes appear very odd in the midst of short scenes.

Still, 'Kuru-Van-Dahan' marks a definite advance over the plays of the ninteenth century, (as we shown above) and the plays of the following period even improved upon 'Kuru-Van-Dahan' and tried to do away with various defects that are to be found in this play.

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1. E.g. the lengthy soliloquy of Ashvatthama in Act III, Scene I; of the soldier in Act IV Scene 1; of Bhim in Act IV Scene I; of Vinayandhar in the same scene; long soliloquy of the charioteer in Act IV Scene 2 etc.etc.

HINDI DRAMA IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (Contd.)

Chapter XI

THE SECOND PHASE (1912-1932)

Various Tendencies of the Period.

After stepping over the sterile period we now descend upon one of the most flourishing periods of Hindi drama, i.e. from 1912 to 1932. Besides several other eminent playwrights, this period is dominated by the collossal personality of Jay Shankar Prasad. The literary drama made a wide and remarkable progress in this period, and it produced a number of plays, which can be called the proud asset of Hindi drama.

Before proceeding to deal with different plays of this period, it will be appropriate to indicate the main tendencies of the audience during this period. While there were people who took keen interest in the lives of their epic heroes and mythological personalities, there were others who loved the historical personages of the days of Hindu ascendancy; there were yet others who rejoiced in the romantic stories of Arabian Nights and Persian literature. As the tastes of the audience varied, so also their choice of different types of drama. From the point of view of taste, the audience of this period can be broadly divided into following categories:

The first group consisted of those people who mostly lived in villages and earned their livelihood by means of agriculture or labour; they mostly lived away from the crowded cities, the centres of modern education and culture. The education and knowledge of these simple-minded people was confined to the epics or the popular stories of the Puranas. Their taste was naturally religious and they used to revel in religious performances like Ram-Lila, Ras-Lila, and the semi--religious performances of the stories of Puran Bhakta and Gopi Chand etc

To the next category belonged those people who, although living in cities, but were, at the same time, not very much advanced in modern civilization and culture. They consisted mostly of idle, stay-at-home people who seldom work with the spirit of time; shop-keepers, business-men, office-clerks and labourer-class of the cities constituted the bulk of this group. These people, exhausted with their tiresome daily life, sought relief in cheap entertainment of the Parsi theatres and mostly patronised the performances of the love-stories of 'Laila-Majnu' and 'Shirin Farhad' etc. It is true that these people too had a religious bent of mind, but their religious emotions were mostly confined to morning prayers, or going to the temples in the morning or in the evening. They did not like religion to interfere in their means of entertainment, and they revelled in sensational scenes of love and enterprise, and loved to see cheap love, rough humour and frivality on the stage. This group was the largest in magnitude, and it patronised the Parsi theatre for several decades.

There was another class of city people who were moderately educated and cultured, but had a religious tendency and an orthodox bent of mind. They hated the romantic melodramas of the Parsi stage and criticised them as degrading and demoralising. Epic heroes and mythological personages were their ideal, and they loved to see their superhuman deeds being performed on the stage. This group, which was equally large in magnitude, patronised mythological drama.

The fourth group consisted of those highly educated and intelligent people, who were more critical than orthodox in view, and who attached more importance to the glories of their past history than to religion and mythology. They were fired with the spirit of patriotism and cultural revival. They loved ancient Indian culture and civilization, and wished to see the restoration of the lost glory of their country by means of recollecting some of the forgotten tales of India's greatness. Although this group was very small in number, still it consisted of such people as were very intelligent and enlightened, and meant to do real service to the motherland and to the Hindu nation. They ~~gave rise to~~ patronised historical drama, and Jay Shankar Prasad was the pioneer of this school.

Yet another group consisted of those people who were political, social, religious or literary reformers. Various movements, e.g. the religious movement of the Arya-Samaj, the political movement of the Indian National Congress, the literary movement of Bharatendu and M.P. Dvivedi, gave birth to a class of reformers, who saw the situation around them and aimed at the reformation of various contemporary evils by means of drama. For this purpose they adopted the instrument of satire, and in their satirical farces they lashed those evils which they wanted to banish from society and religion.

In addition to various farces and satires which were written on contemporary evils, a number of serious dramas were also written on these very topics. In these, though their number in this period is not so large as that of satires, the playwrights have dealt with the evils of the day in a serious and even didactic manner.[1] In the next period (1933-1948) this realistic tendency in Hindi drama became stronger under Western influence, and these plays developed into the Problem Plays of the modern period.[2] In the domain of problem plays Pt. Lakshmi Narayan Mishra and Seth Govind Das became the pioneers.

So far we were referring to various types of plays that came into existence mainly as a result of different tendencies of the audience. For these plays there was a popular demand by a smaller or larger number of people. But there is one more type of Hindi drama which flourished in this period entirely as a result of the playwright's fancy. Here we are referring to the allegorical drama which was attempted by one or two playwrights in this period. In Sanskrit literature 'Prabodha-Chandrodaya' is a famour example of this type, besides numerous other plays.[3] In this period Prasad's 'Kamana' stands out as a very successful attempt at allegorical drama.

Having thus made a reference to different categories of audience with diverse tendencies and tastes, we now proceed to discuss these types of drama one by one.

1. For such plays see page 182 ff below. 2. See Chapter XXI below.
3. Keith: Sanskrit Drama page 251-256.

Ras -Lilas and Ram -Lilas.

The popular medieval types of performances like the Ras-Lila, Ram-Lila and Nautankis etc., which held their sway in the ninteenth century, remained popular to some extent even in this period. However, their influence was sharp relaxing, and their audience was gradually turning to Parsi theatres; still greater blow to these performances was given by the 'talkies', as the great popularity of the talkies left little audience for these medieval types of entertainment. By the end of the period in question these performances had greatly lost their popularity. Today, while Ram-Lila has still survived in certain parts of the country, Ras-Lila is not known beyond the area of its origin, and Nautankis have died out altogether.

Romantic Plays of the Parsi Theatres.

The Parsi theatrical plays which originated in the ninteenth century and became widely popular, became still more popular and advanced in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Until the end of the last century, melodramas with romantic themes only were popular on the Parsi stage; in the period under question due attention was paid to mythological themes, and playwrights like 'Kathavachak', 'Betab' and others began to draw more upon mythological sources for their plays than the Parsi theatrical playwrights of the ninteenth century. Still, romantic plays, with their plot drawn either from Persian love-stories or popular romantic stories, or occasionally fabricated by the playwrights, also held the ground for a few years. The general characteristics of Parsi theatrical plays have been referred to in Chapter VII in some detail, and they need not be repeated here. Adding a word more regarding these romantic plays in particular we find that the atmosphere of these plays was essentially melodramatic; usually the lover and the beloved would fall in love at first sight in some romantic surroundings, and then would follow a series of obstacles of various kinds, in the way of their consummation of love and final marriage. The obstacles would mostly arise out of the mutual jealousies and hostilities of the two families (e.g. Laila-

Majnu', 'Romeo and Juliet' etc.), or the two families being placed in two opposite social, religious or financial camps. The lover and the beloved had to undergo a series of trials, tribulations and sufferings, and in the end they were often united, while in certain cases ('Shirin-Farhad', 'Laila-Majnu') the drama may have a tragic ending. Other characteristics of these plays like cheap fun, unmaidenly love, atmosphere of frivolity etc. have been described in Chapter VII. In characterisation these plays do not mind including gross improbabilities and inconsistencies; they abound in melodramatic situations, violent action, exciting episodes. Their characters are mostly types and do not possess much individuality; often we find them as ideal lovers, ideal villains, ideal friends and ideal conspirators. These plays present a very narrow and restricted viewpoint about life; they seldom display the subtle and superior emotions of man, and often deal with the gross and worldly emotions of love, enmity, anger, hatred etc. Their heroes and heroines are expert only in love-affairs and the atmosphere of these plays is entirely of love and romance.

CHAPTER XII

MYTHOLOGICAL DRAMA.

Broadly speaking, we come across three different kinds of mythological dramas in this period. Firstly we find the mythological dramas of the Parsi theatres which remained very popular with the masses in this period. Then we find several literary dramas written on my-thological themes; for example, Badri Nath Bhatta wrote 'Kuru-Van-Dahan' and 'Ben-Charit'; Maithili Sharan Gupta wrote 'Chandra-has', and 'Tilottama', Vishvambhar Nath Sharma Kaushik wrote 'Bhishma' and Makhan Lal Chaturvedi wrote 'Krishnarjun-Yuddh' etc.

There is another brief set of plays consisting of Sudarshan's 'Anjana', Prasad's 'Nag-Yajna' and Govind Vallabh Pant's 'Var Mala' etc. But while these plays are based on mythological themes, their atmosphere is not truly mythological. Rightly speaking these plays are historical, because their authors have created a historical and worldly atmosphere in these plays, and not the superhuman and supernatural atmosphere as we find in mythological plays in general.

In addition to these three categories, we find a few more plays which have a mythological atmosphere in spite of a purely historical theme. For instance plays like 'Tulsi Das' of Badri Nath Bhatta, 'Shankar-Digvijay' of Baldev Prasad Mishra, 'Mahatma Kabir' of Hasrat are not mythological plays, as Tulsidas, Shakaracharya and Kabir etc. are not mythological figures. But historical though these characters are, they have been treated by their respective playwrights in a mythological and superhuman manner. Secondly, history does not give us exact account of the lives and achievements of these historical persons; traditional stories, popular among the people and even found in books depict them as semi-mythological persons, with superhuman powers at their command. As these historical personages have been raised to the heights of mythological heroes by the playwrights, so we have discussed these plays also in the list of mythological dramas.

A. Mythological Plays of the Parsi Theatres.

The leading playwrights of this school are Narayan Prasad 'Betab' Radhe Shyam 'Kathavachak' Agha Hashr Kashmiri, Hari Krishna 'Jauhar', Tulsi Datt 'Shaida', Shri Krishna 'Hasrat' and Kishan Chand 'Zeba'. Their mythological plays have much in common with their romantic melodramas, but they have a few notable distinctions too. Firstly, these mythological plays have mostly a didatic note behind them; directly or indirectly the playwrights sermonise to the audience on some religious or moral principle. For instance in the introduction to 'Patni Pratap or Sati Anasuya' Betabl tells us that the aim of his drama is to establish the greatness of faithful wife.

Not only that these plays have a didactic note, some of them impart more than one lessons in one play, and the playwrights may have multifarious messages for the audience in one single play; for instance Baldev Prasad Khare, in his 'Prastavana' to 'Raja Shivi' informs us that the aim of his work is two-fold - (i) religious teaching, and (ii) uplift of the country. Similarly in 'Bhakta-Prahlad' Radhe-Shyam Kathavachak emphasizes devotion to God on one side, and indirectly preaches the doctrine of Ahimsa and Satyagraha of Mahatma Gandhi on the other; in the same play he also pleads for the education of women. 'Hasrat' preaches Hindu-Muslim unity in his 'Mahatma Kabir'.

In order to make their didactic note more deep and emphatic, these playwrights resort to a strange course. Alongside of the main plot, they generally invent one or more imaginary plots in order to enhance and intensify the effect of their teachings. In 'Sati Anasuya' for example, the main plot is that of Anasuya; but there are two other subordinate plots — one for comparison, of Rewa who, with the power of her wifely virtue stops the rising of the Sun and the second plot for contrast, of an immoral woman who suffers for her dirty deeds. So, by comparison and contrast, the playwright has tried, in his own way, to make Anasuya's character more conspicuous and impressive, and to produce deeper effect on the mind of the audience than otherwise.

Similarly, in 'Raja Dilip' of Gopal Damodar Tamaskar, the main plot is that of Raja Dilip and his wife Sudakshina and their devotion to Vashishtha's cow Nandini. In addition to this, for comparison with the main plot, the playwright has introduced the story of Sutashan and Raksha who are very much worried for having no issue and go to sage Kushishtha for for his advice and blessings; on the other hand the story of Hutashan and Kudaksha, who are fed up with the large number of children and find it difficult to bring them up properly, has been invented for contrast.

The main plot being mythological and well-known, these play-wrights did not find much scope for originality and invention in it. So they resorted to the scheme of secondary plots, in which their genius, of whatever nature it was, could have a free hand. Here one can promptly ask as to why did not these playwrights dispense with the main mythological plot altogether and develop only their secondary plots into a primary one. They could have given greater evidence of their genius and dramatic skill had they concentrated all their attention on the fabricated plot. But we have to remember that a large section of their audience used to be of an orthodox nature and it rejoiced to see mythological personages moving on the stage; moreover, that section was mainly drawn by the names of the mythologi-cal personages, and did not possess minute critical sense of care-fully examining the proper portraiture of those personages. Supposing if 'Raja Dilip' of Gopal Damodar Tamaskar was performed on the stage after only substituting ordinary names for mythological names, very few people of this orthodox group would have liked the play, although the events and the plot of the play would have been kept absolutely the same.

So it was for the glamour of mythological and epic names in the minds of orthodox people that these playwrights gave priority to mythological themes. But then one can put the other question; why did not these playwrights devote all their attention and ability to mythological plot only and dispense with the secondary plots altogeth-er. Knowing as they did that the orthodox section of the audience rejoiced more in mythological names and themes than imaginary ones,

they would have done better had they displayed all their skill in developing the mythological plot alone, and giving it a masterly touch and finish. We know Kalidasa's 'Shakuntala' is based on a mythological story, but still the playwright, by dint of his masterly genius and exceptional dramatic skill has made this play one of the best plays of the world.

Here we have to keep another point in view. Firstly, while it is so easy to write a play on a mythological theme, it is, at the same time, so very difficult to infuse necessary life and force in it; superb skill and masterly genius is essential for making a mythological play a really beautiful piece of art. These mythological playwrights either lacked that genius or had no intention to take so much pains to make their works excellent pieces of art. Hence they, instead of giving evidence of their talent in the main plot alone, resorted to the cheap tactics of introducing secondary plots.

Secondly, with this scheme of secondary plots, they meant to kill two birds with one stone. While there was a large section of the audience which consisted of orthodox people interested in mythological themes, there was another equally large group in the audience which was not very religious or orthodox in matters of entertainment and who liked imaginary themes and plots no less than mythological ones. By adding imaginary plots in their mythological plays, these playwrights satisfied this latter group; and thus by introducing mythological and imaginary plots side by side in their plays, these playwrights attracted both these sections of audience to one and the same play.

Another outstanding feature of these plays is the abundance of supernatural element. The supernatural situations gave rise to surprising and sensational scenes[1] which the audience liked very much; the audience believed in and very much liked to see the supernatural and surprising feats of their mythological heroes, and so the playwrights intentionally introduced such scenes in their plays, although these scenes may be irrelevant and inconsistent. For instance, in 'Hasrat's 'Mahatma Kabir' when Kabir delivers a speech on Hindu-

1. Some such scenes have been quoted in Chapter VII page 93

Muslim unity, then suddenly appears a scene in which is shown Mahatma Gandhi shaking hands with Maulana Shaukat Ali; and immediately as Kabir claps his hands, Queen Victoria, Edward VII and George V make their appearance on the stage.

Another serious defect in the mythological plays of this school is that their authors have totally failed or have not at all cared to present a realistic atmosphere of mythological times. They have represented great mythological persons in no better or finer colours than our ordinary people of the ninteenth or the twentieth century. For instance, in 'Gangavataran' of Hasrat the conversation between Lakshmi and Saraswati descends to the shameless level of wanton girls.[1] Again attend to the dialogue of Bhagirath and the princess in the same play —

राजकुमारी — आप का निवास-स्थान ?
भागीरथ — पास में प्रेमी हो तो स्वर्ग-उद्यान, नहीं तो उजड़ा मैदान।
राजकुमारी — आपका नाम।
भागीरथ — प्रेम में बदनाम।
राजकुमारी - यदि प्रेमी प्राप्त हो?
भागीरथ - तब तो अहो भाग्य! etc. etc.

This is the trend of talk of Bhagirath, that illustrious scion of Sagar who brought the divine Ganga from heaven to the earth. In fact, for the right portraiture of mythological persons and times, a thorough study of the culture and civilization of the social and religious condition of those times was essential; but these playwrights had neither the will nor the ability to undertake such a careful study. As the general audience looked for cheap fun and frivolity in entertainment, the playwrights provided them with that stuff even in mythological plays.

Nor have these playwrights displayed an adequate power of characterisation. For the most part they have delineated their characters on the basis of mythology; but wherever they have introduced any changes or innovations, they have deteriorated the character. Moreover, their characterisation is sometimes inconsistent

1. See page 91 above.

and irrelevant; if they depict a particular character very great and firm in one virtue according to mythology, they bring him down to the ordinary level in the other; for instance, to refer to Bhagirath again (in 'Gangavataran'), so far as his story of bringing the Ganga to the world is concerned, the playwright has maintained his mythological standard of greatness; but where the author has tried to invent the remaining account of his life, he has portrayed him as low as a common man of the world.

As a result of this kind of characterisation, the didactic note of these plays fails to find much effect on the audience; although the playwrights seek to preach against some social or religious evils through their characters, still their words do not impress upon the minds of the people, because they come from the mouth of such characters as are no way higher than their own selves in everyday life.

Equally disappointing are these plays from the point of view of diction. The diction of 'Kathavachak's' plays is literary and graceful to some extent, but even his similes and metaphors are sometimes as distasteful and dirty as of other theatrical playwrights. There is no touch of refined taste or literary finish in their language as we find from the following verse of 'Patni-Pratap'-

यम - सच है :

टपक पड़ती है सब की राल बाहर की सफ़ाई पर,
वरक चिपकाए हैं चांदी के गोबर की मिठाई पर।
इधर कागज़ की इक रद्दी है मक्खन और मलाई पर,
नज़र क्या जाय इसकी खुशनुमा गिज़ाई पर, बड़ाई पर।

Summing up we can say that from various viewpoints — plot-construction, characterisation, atmosphere and diction — the mythological plays of this school have been of a very low standard. They had little artistic merit and dramatic worth, although by providing the audience with cheap entertainment, they became very popular among common people.

B. Mythological Plays of Bhatta's School.

The leading plays of this period are 'Kuru-Van-Dahan' (1912) 'Ben-Charitra' (1921) and 'Tulsi Das' (1922) of Badri Nath Bhatta, 'Tilottama' (1916) and 'Chandra-has' (1916) of Maithili Sharan Gupta, 'Bhishma' (1918) of Vishuambhar Nath Sharma Kaushik, 'Krishnarjun-Yuddha' of Makhan Lal Chaturvedi, 'Siddharath-Kumar' (1922) of Chandra Raj Bhandari, and 'Shankar Digvijay' of Baldev Prasad Mishra. Of these, we have dealt with 'Kuru-Van- Dahan' (1912) in Chapter X; in 'Tulsi Das' (1922) again Bhatta has tried to bring about a combination of the techniques of classical and theatrical dramas. The play begins with the Nandi and the Prastavana and has three acts further sub-divided into scenes. Like theatrical plays Bhatta has used the word 'Scene' and not 'Drishya' for the word 'Scene'. Although the play deals with the events of the life of a historical person, yet it has an abundance of supernatural element (as in Act I Scene 4; Act II Scene 1 Scene 4, Scene 6, etc.) In 'Ben-Charitra' also Bhatta has followed the same style and technique as in his other two plays named above; the use of Urdu words in this play, which deals with pre-Mahabharat times is certainly anachronistic.

The theme of 'Tilottama' has been summed up by the playwright in the couplet (which is written on the title page of the book)—

होता है बन्धु-विरोध जहां।
है सर्वनाश ही उचित वहां॥

Sund and Upsund, two demons had got a boon that they will never die except when killed by each other; getting strong and fearless with this boon they began to prove a source of nuisance to the gods. At this the gods thought out a plan of their destruction; they sent Tilottama, an exceedingly charming nymph, to the demons; on beholding her matchless beauty both the demons developed a strong fancy for her; now Tilottama became their bone of contention and both the demons with the idea of attaining her, killed each other in battle. This play has been written strictly on classical lines and has abundant poetry and several songs. The author has not shown any skill in plot-construction or characterisation.

Better than 'Tilottama' is Gupta's 'Chandra-Has' which is again written on classical lines. It deals with the story of Chandra-Has, who is a true devotee of God. At the following prophesy of sage Galav about Chandra-Has, that

अनाथ कोई जग में नहीं है
त्रैलोक्य का नाथ सभी कहीं है।
क्या ठीक है जो यह मार्गचारी,
बने तुम्हारा विषयाधिकारी॥

Dhrist-Budhi, the minister of Kuntalpur gets startled, and in order to falsify the above prophecy of the sage, he makes several attempts at the life of Chandra-Has; but 'Niyati' plays a very important role and frustrates all the attempts of Dhrist-Buddhi. Everytime when the minister arranges to get Chandra Has murdered, 'Niyati' protects the latter, who, in the end, is married to the daughter of that very minister and also succeeds the ing of Kuntal Pur. In this play Gupta has shown greater skill in plot-construction and characterisation; while Dhrist-Buddhi plays the part of a villain, Chandra-Has's character shows the influence of Mahatma Gandhi's character on playwright's mind. Jokes of विषया + विलासिनी in Act IV, Scene 3 are very lively and interesting, and add to the dramatic beauty of the scene. The themes of other plays are evident from their names.

If compared with the mythological plays of Betab school, the plays of this school are much better works of art as we shall show. Firstly their aim is purely literary and not didactic; they were not written in order to preach a particular doctrine or lesson like the mythological plays of 'Betab' school. Further, although these plays deal with mythological plots, yet their authors have given abundant evidence of originality by inventing new characters and situations, which have enhanced the dramatic beauty of their works. Unlike the playwrights of 'Betab' school, these dramatists have not resorted to the cheap tactic of introducing secondary plots for instituting a comparison and a contrast; they have mostly stuck to one main plot and have concentrated all their skill on the same. In their plays there is no unrestrained rush of actions, scenes and situations; their situations are generally relavant and helpful to the artistic effect of the plays; and their plot is mostly well constructed.

Although in plays like 'Tulsi Das' the supernatural element is quite abundant, yet, on the whole, it is less frequent, and more useful in these plays than in the mythological plays of the theatrical branch. It is not for the purpose of producing sensational and surprising scenes that supernatural situations have been introduced in these plays, but they have been inserted for the purpose of the development of the plot or for enhancing the greatness of their leading characters; for instance in 'Krishnarjun-Yuddh' of Makhan Lal Chaturvedi, the scene of Chitrarath's flying in the sky in his aerial car and the subsequent appearance of Brahma in the battlefield are essential for the proper development of the plot. In 'Tulsi Das' the supernatural scenes (like Tulsi Das's meeting with Hanuman, Rama and Lakshman etc.) have been introduced for magnifying Tulsi Das's character and to impress upon the minds of the audience his wonderful power of sincere devotion. Similarly in other plays the choice of the supernatural element is useful and considerate; in Chandra Has' of Maithili Sharan Gupta the conception of Niyati is a beautiful invention of the poet; it is she who, although invisible, is responsible for frustrating all the villainous plans of Dhrisht Buddhi and for defending Chandra Has against all evils.

The atmosphere of these plays is comparatively more realistic and faithful than that of the theatrical plays of 'Betab' school; at the same time it is not so powerful and exact as to make us feel transported to those very times and lands. In 'Shankar Digvijay', for instance, the author has nicely described the religious chaos and confusion that was prevalent at the time of Shankaracharya, who defeated all the opposite schools of thought and preached his doctrine of 'Advait-Vad'. In the same way in 'Krishnarjun-Yuddh', the playwright has tried to bring about the atmosphere of those times, although the character of the two disciples of sage Galav is not much different from our typical students of today.

Although these playwrights have achieved greater success than those of 'Betab' school, in creating an atmosphere of reality and the spirit of those times, yet they have committed several blunders of anachronism. We have already pointed out[1] how Badri Nath Bhatta

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1. See page 115-6 above.

has committed the blunder of using Urdu-Persian words in his 'Kuru-Van-Dahan' and 'Ben-Charitra', & creating an atmosphere of medieval Indian times than that of the times of Mahabharat. In 'Tulsi Das' again (Act I, Scene 8) we find the queen arresting the Major and the Captain with the help of a pistol (तमंचा). Now 'Major' and 'Captain' are modern titles, and cannot be assigned to the officers of Indian army in the days of Tulsi Das. In the same way in 'Ben-Charitra' so many conspiracies, all of such a nature, have been designed that they do not look appropriate for the Sat Yuga. Such cases of anachronisms and oversights can also be detected in other plays of this school, which prove that these playwrights have not taken due pains to take care of the details of their plays.

In characterisation also these playwrights have shown greater skill; they appear to have understood the proper significance of characterisation in a play. If they have not succeeded in making their mythological characters so sublime and ideal, they have also not pulled them down to the level of ordinary men of the world. Again they have escaped the serious defect of inconsistency caused by portraying one side of a character very high and idealistic and the other side very ordinary and low.

At the same time we have to admit that none of these playwrights has devoted great attention and skill to characterisation; firstly, the authors have not depicted the internal struggle in the minds of their characters. Psycho-analytical study of leading characters which we find in Prasad and his contemporaries, and which gets more frequent and wide in later drama, is lacking in these plays. Moreover, in plays like 'Tulsi Das' and 'Siddharth-Kumar' which are essentially character-plays, no reference has been made to the means of greatness of the characters of the heroes. In the same way in 'Shankar-Digvijay' the hero defeats all the scholars of rival camps, achieves great honour and fame, but nowhere has the playwright described the real cause of his greatness or as to how he conceived his doctrine of Advait.

Summing up we can say that although from the point of view of plot-construction, characterisation and atmosphere etc., the mythological playwrights of Bhatta school are decidedly superior to

those of ~~of~~ 'Betab' school, yet their works suffer from several defects and they are certainly inferior works of art when compared the works of 'Prasad' school.

(c) Prasad's School of Mythological Drama.

In addition to his historical plays for which he is so celebrated, Jay Shankar Prasad has written one or two mythological plays too (viz. 'Janmejay Ka Nag-Yajna'); Sudarshan's 'Anjana' and Govind Vallabh Pant's 'Varmala' also belong to this category. But although the themes of these plays have been drawn from mythology, yet they have been treated by their authors in a historical style; they are lacking in the essential characterstics of mythological plays, like the introduction of supernatural element or a mythological atmosphere. Except their plot, they are like the historical plays of Prasad's school; therefore it is proper to discuss these plays under that heading in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER XIII

HISTORICAL DRAMA.

Although in this period historical drama was not very popular among the audience, which revelled more in the performance of mythological dramas and romantic melodramas, still this is the more artistic and literary type in the period in question. At the bottom of the historical plays of this period mostly works a strong feeling of patriotism and cultural reival. Some of the outstanding plays of this period are Prasad's 'Rajya-Shri' (1915), Vishakh (1921), 'Ajat-Shatru' (1922) 'Skand-Gupta' (1928), 'Chandra Gupta' (1931); Bechan-Sharma 'Ugra's 'Mahatma Isa' (1922), Sudarshan's 'Anjana' (1922), Prasad's 'Nag-Yajna' (1926), Govind Vallabh Pan's 'Var-Mala' (1925), Jagan Nath Prasad Milind's 'Pratap-Pratijna' (1928) and Udaya Shankar Bhatta's 'Chandra-Gupta Maurya' (1931) etc.

Besides these, there are a few more plays which though histori-cal are yet not so much advanced and artistic. They still betray some tendencies and traits of the Parsi theatre; Badri Nath Bhatta's 'Durgavati' (1925) and 'Chandra Gupta', Chandra Raj Bhandari's 'Samrat Ashok' (1923), Prem Chand's 'Karbala' (1924) are some of the plays of this class.

Bhatta's School of Historical Drama.

In 'Durgavati' (1925) the character of the brave Rajput queen of Gadh-Mandala has been portrayed to describe her administrative capacity, her courage of heart and her enviable skill in the use of arms and strategies of war. Inspite of her defeat and death of her foremost fighters and brave beloved son Vir Narayan, she does not lose courage, but fights on till she is killed by one of her own men who had turned a traitor. The closing scene of the play is an ingenious invention of the playwright in which the queen,

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[illegible]'s School of Historical Drama.

In 'Durgavati' (1925) the character of the brave queen of Garha-Mandla has been portrayed so [illegible] [illegible]

after her death, ascends to heaven and is there introduced to the hero-
ic and self-sacrificing personages of the past like Chandra Gupta
Maurya, Vikramaditya, Dahar, Prithvi Raj and others. This scene is a
reflection of the influence of Parsi theatrical plays on author's mind,
but it does not look so cheap here as the melodramatic and super-
natural scenes of Parsi theatrical plays.

The characters of the queen, her brave son, her minister and
the commander-in-chief, as also of traitor Badan Sinh and his ideal
patriotic wife Sumati have been well-portrayed. While Durgavati stands
as an ideal of nobility and patriotism, Badan Sinh the traitor proves
quite contrary to her ideals. His character is most despicable and
contempible in the play, so much so that his own wife (Sumati) chooses
to kill him with her own hands. With this otherwise unpardonable
offence, Sumati rises in the estimation and admiration of all; she
stands as an ideal Hindi woman who, truly patriotic as she is, does
not hesitate in slaying her own husband (as he was a traitor), and
then, like a most faithful and loving wife, she immolates herself with
the dead body of her lord.

The play betrays great influence of the theatrical drama. Be-
sides the last scene (referred to above) which has been conceived on
a theatrical model, the theatrical influence is evident from the fre-
quent use of verse in course of dialogue. Verses, of a theatrical
type, have been put even in the month of the queen, e.g.

रानी-...... आ चली आंधी इधर, यह चील मंडराने लगी,
बादलों की-सी गरज कुछ कान में आने लगी। (Act I, Scene 3)

The dialogue is mostly lively and conducted in a simple langu-
age of everyday use; but the soliloquies and the 'asides' are very
frequent, and on certain occasions the characters give vent to their
emotions in poetry, even in 'aside' ; e.g.

पृथ्वीराज-(तलवार पटककर आप ही आप)
राजपूत की जाति पर पड़ी आज है गाज;
हाय गई वह वीरता! हाय गई वह लाज!
जिसका हम को गर्व था, पड़ी उसी पर धूल;
इससे तो अच्छा यही, हों क्षत्रिय निर्मूल! (Act I Scene I)

The comic has been introduced on very few occasions, and that

also amidst very serious situations which makes the humour look absurd and out of tune with the situation; for example, when the queen is very serious and even annoyed, Giradhari Lal makes the following reply—

गिड़धाड़ीलाल — (तलवार को म्यान में रखता हुआ) आप विश्वास कीजिए, मैं चाहूं, तो अभी अपनी गरदन काट लूं। हां, केवल यही सोचकर रह जाता हूं कि तलवार भी ब्रह्म है और गरदन भी ब्रह्म है। एक ब्रह्म को दूसरे ब्रह्म से क्यों लड़ाऊं? आपस की फूट अच्छी नहीं होती।

(Act I Scene 7)

The play has only three acts, and although characterisation is quite powerful and adequate, the plot has been loosely constructed, and the action is unnecessarily swift, or slow at various places.

Bhatta's 'Chandra Gupta' which has five acts, betrays greater influence of thatrical drama; even the word 'Scene' has not been written as 'Drishya' but 'Scene' after the practice of theatrical dramas. The plot of this play begins where that of 'Mudra-Rakshasa' ends; but this play is much inferior to that well-known drama of political intrigues. Nor has the playwright undertaken a careful research of ancient Indian history; rather the effect of contemporary conditions can be better discerned in this play. Much like the previous play 'Durgavati' in general, 'Chandra Gupta' is even inferior to that work from the point of view of characterisation and plot-construction.

Prem Chand's 'Karbala' (1924), which in his maiden attempt in the field of historical drama, deals with the struggle of Hussain and his ultimate death at the hands of his Muslim foes. The significance of the play is twofold; it represents the spirit of the age and also shows the perpetual struggle between the life of spirit and that of flesh.[1] Hussain stands for the higher ideal of truth and sacrifice; Yazid symbolises the baser life of lust for power and wealth. 'Karbala' is a tragedy of idealism rather than a tragedy of character, as the tragic characters in this play do not fall owing to some flaw in their character, as we find in Shakespearean tragedies. The play is totally unfit for the stage, although it is intresting for study; in the

1. Madan : Modern Hindi Literature; page 109

also and it very serious situations which make the comedy look absurd and out of tune with the situation; for example, when the queen is very serious and even annoyed, Vidushaka makes the following reply—

[illegible]

(Act I Scene 3)

The play has only three acts, and although characterization is quite powerful and adequate, the plot has been loosely connected and the action is unnecessarily swift, or slow at various places.

Bhatta's 'Chandra Gupta' which has five acts, betrays greater influence of theatrical drama; even the word 'drama' has not been written ... [illegible]

[illegible]

introduction the author has said --

"हमने यह नाटक खेले जाने के लिये नहीं लिखा, मगर हमारा विश्वास है कि यदि कोई इसे खेलना चाहें, तो बहुत थोड़ी काटछांट से खेल भी सकते हैं।"

But the abnormal length of the play will certainly bore out the audience; the play will take about six hours to perform it on the stage; and in addition to its inordinate length, battle-scenes consisting of huge armies, camels and tents etc. make it impossible for stage action. Moreover the work is not very impressive as a play, because the author has paid attention more to the sequence of events than laying due emphasis on situations.

The characters being mostly Mohammadans, the language of their dialogue is full of Perso-Arabic words. Sahas Rai and the Yogi, the only two Hindu characters in the play, are the invention of the author's genius; and we hear Hindi only from these two characters in this play. Besides the heroic and the pathetic, which are predominant, the erotic sentiment also steps in with the character of Nasima and Wahib.

Like other plays of this school 'Karbala' also betrays some influence of theatrical dramas or it; here too we find occasional use of verse in course of dialogue; e.g.

अब्बास - भाई के लिये जी से गुज़र जाता है भाई,
जाता है बिरादर भी, जिधर जाता है भाई।
क्या भाई हो तेग़ों में, तो डर जाता है भाई?
आंच आती है भाई पै, तो मर जाता है भाई। (Act V, Scene 5)

Again, several songs also, mostly of the theatrical nature have been introduced at various places; e.g.

हां खुले साक़ी दरे-पैमाना आज,
ख़ैर हो, भर दे मेरा पैमाना आज।
नाज़ करता झूमता मस्ताना वार,
अब्र आता है, सूए-मैखाना आज।
बोसए-लबे हुस्न के सदके में दे,
ओ बुते तरसा हमें तरसा न आज। etc. (Act II Scene 2)

Again the song of Hussain 'बेटा हूं अली का व नेवासा रसूल का (V, 6)' etc. before the enemies as also the song 'मरकर भी न भूलूंगा मैं एहसान तुम्हारे (V, 6)' betray a theatrical imitation.

In general we find that the plot of these historical plays is very complicated; action has been piled upon action, and due to the

rush of events and situations, the construction of their plot gives some impression of looseness and incoherence. In 'Durgavati' even the supernatural element has been used (in the last scene) in the fashion of mythological dramas. Moreover, the internal struggle of human mind has not been adequately brought out in any one of these plays. There is also a lack of high moments and tense situations in which the leading characters of a drama may give vent to their innermost feelings. Due to this want of psycho-analytical portraiture, characterisation of these plays has not become very powerful and perfect.

(B) Prasad's School of Historical Drama.

Reserving Prasad's plays to discuss in a separate chapter, here we take up other plays of his school. Sudarshan's 'Anjana' (1922) is an excellent mythological play written on historical lines. The heroine Anjana represents the ideal of chastity, service and sacrifice. Her husband, Pavan, has gone away for a period of twelve years; in the meantime he pays a flying visit to his wife and stays with her for a few days without the knowledge of other members of the family. This complicates the situation and Anjana's chastity is challenged by Pavana's mother. Ultimately the innocent young wife is exiled and she undergoes a series of sufferings in banishment. While Anjana is passing her days in distress in a jungle in the company of her friend Vasant Mala, the latter suggests her to approach her husband, who is busy in a battle. But Anjana, idealistic as she is in her spirit of sacrifice and patriotism refuses to do so and says —

"वे इस समय युद्ध-भूमि में यशः प्राप्ति का काम कर रहे हैं, देश की सेवा कर रहे हैं, संसार में अपने देश का सर ऊंचा कर रहे हैं; मैं जाकर उनके हृदय को दूसरी ओर कर दूंगी तो सारा काम चौपट हो जायेगा, उनके अद्वितीय बल में न्यूनता आ जायेगी, पराक्रम थोड़ा हो जायेगा। मैं यह पापकर्म नहीं कर सकती — अपने सुख पर देश और जाति के यश को निछावर नहीं कर सकती।"

'Anjana' is a definite advance over previous mythological and historical dramas;[1] in the first place the playwright has carefully dispensed with the convention of introducing frequent couplets in course of conversation. Secondly, he has laid a deep stress on the human motivation of characters and incidents in this tale of mythology. The

1. I.N.Madan: Modern Hindi Literature, page 88-89

plot has become very complicated; but Sudarshan's dialogues are often very lively and forceful, and at certain places deeply sentimental. With slight abridgements, the play can be successfully presented on the stage.

Ugra's 'Mahatma Isa' (1922) is also a beautiful play in which a foreign theme has been infused with Indian ideals and atmosphere. The playwright believes that Christ came to India in his young days, studied Hindu scriptures and imbibed Hindu ideals of service and sacrifice, and preached the same in his motherland. Accordingly the character of Isa (Christ) has been depicted in no different colours than those of a Hindu Saint; he has much in common with the serenity and selfless aims of Mahatma Buddha or Mahatma Gandhi, and their ideals of Ahimsa, forgiveness, service and sacrifice.

Ugra's characterisation is very natural, and the characters of Isa, Shanti, Yohan and Herod have been invested with individuality. The play is also not lacking in high moments and tense situations; for example, the scene of Christ's crucifixion has been made very touching, but the sagacious playwright has not ended the play with that scene. I differ with Dr. Nagendra, when the latter says that the author has[1] not done well in adding a few more scenes after Isa's crucifixion, and that this has relaxed the dramatic effect. No doubt the climax is reached at the scene of Christ's crucifixion; but as the theme is un-Indian and very few Indians are familiar with the details of Christ's life, the playwright has acted wisely in adding a few scenes which describe the wonderful consequences of Christ's sacrifice, and the ultimate death of Herod, the villain. By naming his play as 'Mahatma Isa' the author does not mean only to emphasize the virtues of Isa's physical self; he also wants to point out the deep effect of Isa's spiritual self even after his physical death, as in the case of such great men their death is sometimes more impressive than their life. Isa could not do in his life what he could do as a result of his brutal death. So, in order to make the Indian readers familiar with the wonderful and wide effects of Isa's sacrifice it was wise on the part of the playwright to add subsequent scenes.

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1. Dr. Nagendra: Adhunik Hindi Natak, page 28.

The dialogues of the play are very lively and forceful in general; some of the speeches are very emotional and full of strong force; e.g. Shanti's speech at the touching scene of Isa's crucifixion —

शान्ति — ठहरो! अत्याचार के बादलो! सूर्यास्त से पहले कमलों को अपने मित्र की पवित्र मूर्ति आंख भर देख लेने दो; नहीं तो उनके दुखी हृदय से प्रचण्ड वायु की तरह शोकोच्छ्वास निकलेगा और तुम्हारा सर्वनाश हो जायेगा। ठहरो! क्रूरता की अग्नि-शिखाओ! किसी गरीब का सर्वस्व भस्म करने से पहले उसे अपनी निधि निरीक्षण कर लेने दो, नहीं तो उसकी आंखों से वह जलप्रपात प्रकट होगा जिसमें तुम्हारा अस्तित्व तक लुप्त हो जायेगा। (Act III, Scene 8)

The language of the play is pure Hindi throughout; even non-Indian characters speak pure Hindi as we see in the following —

शोक्ल — सम्राट को इस आन्दोलन को शीघ्र रोक देना चाहिए — नहीं तो फिर कुछ भी करते धरते न बनेगा। गुप्तचरों से पता चला है कि ईसा और ईसाइयों के भाषणों का जनता के ऊपर विचित्र प्रभाव पड़ता है। (Act III Scene 1)

Although the pathetic is predominant towards the end, the comic has also been occasionally introduced, especially in the beginning in the conversation of the disciples of Vivekacharya. At several places, Isa is made to praise India and Indian ideals in devotional terms; e.g.

ईसा — आर्य, आप धन्य हैं और धन्य है आपकी सभ्यता। इतनी उदारता, इतनी सहृदयता!
नागरिक — तो चलिए।
ईसा — (अनसुनी करके) क्या पृथ्वी के अन्य किसी भाग में ऐसे मनुष्य मिल सकते हैं? कदापि नहीं। यहां का एक-एक प्राणी देवता है — है एक स्थान स्वर्ग! (Act I Scene 1)

In addition to this a number of songs have been interspersed throughout the play; and many of these songs, beside their melody, are full of strong patriotic feelings, which indicate the influence of contemporary thought on author's mind. In the very opening song of the play, i.e. स्वाधीन हमारी माता है — स्वाधीन।
खर-त्रिशूल, करवाल-युक्त कर,
देख शत्रु का मद जाता डर।
निज वश कर, पशुता हर है वह विकट-सिंह आसीन! etc. etc.

We find a re-echo of our national song बन्दे मातरम् ; other songs like जय उदार, सृष्टि-सार, स्वर्ग-द्वार देश etc. (Act II Scene 4) and ज्ञानी, बलवान, सरल देश है हमारा (Act I Scene 3) also resound with similar patriotic feelings. Besides

these songs, a few theatrical songs (e.g. प्यारी प्यारी बतियां प्यारी - रसभरी अंखियां प्यारी etc. Act III Scene 4) and Ghazals (1, 9; II, 1; III,2 etc.) have been introduced which indicate the influence of Parsi theatrical plays on author's mind.

Supernatural element has also been used on a few occasions; after Yohan's murder his ghost terrifies the evil-doers (Act II Scene 3), and in the same way Christ's ghost also haunts the villain after the former's crucifixion; as in the following—

शाकेल — (भयभीत) अरे! यह — ईसा? हां वही तो! वही है! यह यहां कैसे आया? समाधि से बाहर कैसे आया? प्रेत होकर! प्रेत — प्रेत! वह — वह — उसके हाथ में — क्रूसकी कीलों के छिद्र अभी तक बने हुए हैं। अभी उसमें का रक्त भी नहीं सूखा! ओह! कैसी तीव्र — अग्निमयी दृष्टि है। (आंखें मूंद लेता है) etc.

(Act III Scene 12)

Besides being an interesting play, 'Mahatma Isa' can also be successfully represented on the stage.

'Var-Mala' (1925) of Govind Vallabh Pant deals with the love-story of Avikshit and Vaishalini, and depicts the heroine's sudden change of love into hatred and hatred into love. Avikshit, being deeply in love with Vaishalini, secretly approaches her in the garden ; this act of Avikshit suddenly changes the heroine's love into hatred and she says "प्रेम करती हूं; लेकिन तुमसे नहीं, तुम्हारी घृणा से "(Act I Scene 1).

Next day on the occasion of Vaishalini's Svayamvara, Avikshit takes her away by force, before she could put the wedding garland (वरमाला) round the neck of any prince. In the way, Avikshit again prays to her for her love, but she is still adamant in her hatred. Here take place two incidents which suddenly change heroine's hatred into love; firstly Avikshit goes to the river-side to fetch water; there he is attacked by a crocodile, and here Vaishalini saves him by killing the crocodile with an arrow. Soonafter, heroine's father and his army reach that place; they attack Avikshit, who is single-handed and has also no arms left with him, and succeed in arresting him. Well, these events quickly change Vaishalini's hatred into love. Avikshit is taken by Vaishalini's father to his capital, and Vaishalini looks after him with great care and affection. In the end Avikshit recovers from his injuries, but now when Vaishalini's hatred has turned into love, Avikshit does not think himself fit for her love. Very impressive is the following dialogue in which Avikshit pleads himself unfit for Vaishalini —

अवीक्षित – छोड़ दो, मेरा स्पर्श न करो। (नेपथ्य में किसी के आने की आहट होती है.....)
जिस तरह पूर्व और पश्चिम नहीं मिल सकते, उसी तरह हम एक दूसरे से भिन्न हैं। जितनी दूर बौने के हाथों से चन्द्रमा है, तुम मुझसे उतनी ही दूर हो।

(एकाएक करंधम और विशाल का प्रवेश।)

विशाल – नहीं नहीं, इतना ही समीप, जितना चन्द्रमा के समीप चांदनी। etc. etc.
. . . .

करंधम – क्या इस समय भी किन्तु की आवश्यकता होगी? कौन कह सकता है कि यह जोड़ी एक दूसरे के उपयुक्त नहीं है।

अवीक्षित – मैं कह सकता हूं। मैं किसी प्रकार वैशालिनी के उपयुक्त नहीं हूं।

विशाल – क्यों?

अवीक्षित – क्योंकि मैं कायर हूं, युद्ध में पराजित आपका बंदी हूं। (करंधम से) पिताजी, मैं कुपुत्र हूं, मैंने आपके गौरव को कलंकित किया है। मैं वैशालिनी के योग्य नहीं, वैशालिनी मेरे लायक नहीं। etc. etc. etc.etc. (Act I Scene 4).

Now Avikshit leaves the palace of Vaishalini; Vaishalini, who is sincere in love pines for him, leaves her palace and undergoes various sufferings in jungles. While wandering in woods, Vaishalini is once saved unknowingly by Avikshit from a Rakshasa (Act III Scene 3); here she again prays to Avikshit for his favour of love and her request is accepted this time; at this she puts the withered wedding garland round Avikshit's neck and both are happily joined.

As compared with other plays of this school, the plot of 'Var-Mala' is very simple and it runs across a single line. The characters of Avikshit and Vaishalini have been depicted with force and care and there is great life and power in dialogue which gets occasion-ally poetical as in the following speech of Avikshit —

अवीक्षित – किन्तु तुम्हारे उपवन में जब पुष्प-भंडार लेकर वसन्त आता है, तब तो उसे कोई प्रहरी नहीं रोकता। जब कल-कूजन के साथ कोकिला आती है, तब ये प्रहरी कहां रहते हैं? वर्षा के साथ जब पावस के उमड़ते हुए मेघ यहां की द्रुम-गुल्म-लताओं को सींचने के लिये आते हैं, तो उनका निषेध क्यों नहीं किया जाता? जब तुषार को लेकर शिशिर तुम्हारे उपवन में प्रवेश करता है, तो उसे भी कोई बाधा नहीं पहुंचाता। etc.etc. (Act I Scene 1)

Quite forceful again is the following speech of Vaishalini, when she describes the difference in the nature of man and woman —

वैशालिनी – यह तुम अपने स्वभाव का परिचय दे रहे हो। मनुष्य जिसे प्यार करता है उस पर दया नहीं करता; जिस पर दया करता है उसे प्यार नहीं करता। राम ने सीता को प्यार किया, लेकिन उस पर दया नहीं की। जब वह सुकुमार प्राणा गर्भवती थी, उसे भीषण दंड दे वनवासिनी बना दिया। दुष्यन्त ने शकुन्तला पर दया की किन्तु उसे प्यार नहीं किया। जब वह दुष्यन्त का आश्रय ग्रहण करने आई, तो उसने

पत्थर से भी अधिक कठोर होकर उस कोमलांगी का परित्याग किया। किन्तु नारी — नारी जिसे प्यार करती है, उस पर दया करती है। जिस पर दया करती है, उसे प्यार भी करती है। (Act I scene 4)

As Pant has close familiarity with the stage and has worked as a playwright for the 'Vyakul Theatrical Company' [1], his work can be very successfully presented on the stage. At the same time this play, as it is meant for a theatrical company, betrays great impression of theatrical technique on it (e.g. in various उपदृश्य s in Act III)

The next successful historical play is 'Pratap-Pratijna' (1928) of Jagannath Prasad 'Milind'. It begins with the ~~imitation~~ initiation of Pratap as the ruler of Mewar and ends with his death. The Rajput princes who are a house divided against itself, fall an easy prey to the shrewd policy of Akbar. Pratap, who has been entrusted with the honour of his motherland symbolises the spirit of patriotism and chivalry. The Crown to him is a symbol of duty, a bed of thorns, as he says —

प्रताप— आपके आग्रह के आगे सिर झुकाना मेरा धर्म है। मैं खूब जानता हूं वीरो, यह कांटों का ताज है। शूलों की सेज है, न्याय की दुधारी तलवार है, त्याग का सर्वोच्च शिखर है! यह मुकुट नहीं कर्तव्य है! जितना उज्ज्वल है उतना ही कटु है। यह प्रभुत्व का चिह्न नहीं, सेवा का निशान है; राजकुमारों का विलास नहीं, वीरों का बलिदान है" etc.etc.

In his struggle with his foe he loses everything, but true hero that he is, he is ready to break but not to bend and to sacrifice everything for his ideal.

The character of Akbar has been painted in varied colours. While on one hand he tries to bring the two races together. at the same time, like an expert diplomat, he knows that battles are not always won by bravery alone. He must divide and rule. The characters of Shakt Sinh and Amar Sinh have also been well-portrayed.

The theme has been selected with the purpose of arousing the national consciousness of the people of the modern age; various events of the play, including the प्रतिज्ञा and conduct of Pratap, Bhama Shah's sacrifice of his long accumulated wealth, bear the glowing message of patriotism beside their historical value. Different soliloquies (e.g. of Pratap) which have been written at a high poetical and emotional pitch, ~~and they~~ influse great life in the play. The language is very forceful and rich in metaphors and similes. The work is a splendid piece of drama and can be staged with success and benefit.

1. Introduction to the play.

CHAPTER XIV

DRAMAS OF JAY SHANKAR PRASAD.

Coming to the plays of Jay Shankar Prasad we find that some of them are the best historical plays of this period, in spite of their certain defects; in them the Hindi dramatic art of this period reached its highest water-mark. The dramatic career of Prasad begins from 1910, and in the first four years he wrote four short playsnamely, 'Sajjan' (1910-11), 'Kalyani-Parinay' (1912), Karunalay (1912) and 'Prayashchit' (1914). All these four plays have only one act each.

The plot of 'Sajjan' is based on an episode of the Mahabharata; while the Pandavas are passing their twelve years of exile in jungle, Duryodhana and his friends go to that forest in order to add insult to their injury. Incidentally a fight takes place there between Chitrarath, the Gandharva master of that jungle and Duryodhana, and the latter is taken a captive. When Yudhishthira comes to know of this event, he sends Arjuna to fight against Chitrarath for the release of Duryodhana. In this way Duryodhana is released by the intervention of his noble (सज्जन) brothers.

'Kalyani Parinay' deals with the memorable event of Chandra Gupta Maurya's defeating Seleukos and subsequently marrying the latter's daughter. 'Karunalay' is a lyrical drama of minor merit and importance, and has been discussed in Chapter XXII along with other lyrical dramas. The plot of 'Prayashchit' takes us to the Rajput period; Jai Chand, the historical traitor, at first feels vindictive over the defeat and death of Prithvi Raj; but when rebuked by a pair of Vidyadharis, he decides to do प्रायश्चित for his ignoble deed of helping Mohd. Ghauri against his son-in-law. He sends his army against Ghauri, and himself commits suicide by jumping into the waters of the Ganges.

These early attempts of Prasad at drama are not very important from artistic point of view[1]; the author has not displayed any skill

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1. Dr. Som Nath Gupta: Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas; page 188.

[1]

in plot-construction and characterisation; he has simply given a dramatic shape to different episodes without properly infusing dramatic elements in them. Still, these works have their owin significance; a comparative study of these plays shows that the author is here making different experiments in his art of drama, with the purpose of arriving at some definite results. For instance, in 'Sajjan' and 'Kalyani- Parinay' he has followed the classical style by giving the Nandi, Prastavana and the Bharat- Vakya etc; but we find these classical features missing in 'Prayashchit'. Again there is a rush of verse in conversation in 'Sajjan' and 'Kalyani-Parinay', which we find lacking in 'Prayashchit' again, as if after an experiment. In 'Prayashchit' the language appropriately varies with the characters; Muslim characters speak Persianised Urdu as we find in the following speech of Mohd. Ghauri —

मुहम्मद — बहादुर शफ़कत ? आज सचमुच हिन्दोस्तान हलाली झंडे के नीचे आ गया और यह सब तो एक बात है, दर असल खुदाए पाक को ज़ीनत देना मंज़ूर था। नहीं तो भला इन फ़ौलादी देवज़ादे हिन्दुओं पर फ़तह पाना क्या मुमकिन था?

This is again obviously an experiment in the use of language, as in later plays of Prasad we find only one language (Sanskritised Hindi) used for all characters — whether Indian or non-Indian. In his 'Karunalay' the author has again tried another experiment in writing a lyrical play; this type is not to be found in earlier Hindi drama and Prasad adopted it as a new thing; but after making one experiment he gave up this style. Again, while in his 'Prayashchit' the author has made use of the supernatural element by introducing two Vidyadharis, he has given up its use in his later plays, and even in a mythological play like 'Nag-Yajna' no supernatural element has been used.

In this way these early plays of Prasad are useful as they present a gradual study of the art of Prasad. Before being able to write beautiful and maturer plays like 'Skand-Gupta' and 'Chandra-Gupta', Prasad made these experiments in dramatic art and getting wiser with various experiments he made a definite way for himself and adopted a definite style in his later works. One clear hint that we get from these one-act-plays is that they definitely indicate the historical tendency of their author.

1. Dr. Jagannath Prasad: Prasad Ke Natakon Ka Shastriya Adhyayan page 4 & 8.

In his next play 'Rajya- Shri' (1915) this historical tendency gets stronger. In his introduction to the second edition of this play, Prasad has called it his first historical drama; this further shows that the first four plays (discussed above) were only experiments, and it is only in this play that Prasad's art has come to a definite stand. The aim of the author in this play is to present Rajya-Shri's character;[1] and he has derived his plot from Bana's 'Harsha-Charit' and Hieun-Tsang's account of India. The comparative study of the first and the second editions of this play is very interesting and useful; the first edition bears great affinity with Prasad's earlier works; it gives the Nandi and the Bharat-Vakya, and verse has also been occasionally introduced in course of conversation. These things have been dispensed with in the second edition. In the first edition, the death of Narendra Gupta has been shown, but that being not in conformity with historical findings, has been dropped in the second edition. In the second edition Prasad has added one act (the fourth), a few more scenes and the characters of Hieun Tsang, Pulakesin and Surama. If compared with the first edition, the second edition gives greater evidence of skill in plot-construction and characterisation.

Six years after writing 'Rajya-Shri', Prasad wrote his 'Vishakh' (1921). In the introduction to this play, the author writes —

"क्योंकि हमारी गिरी दशा को उठाने के लिये हमारी जलवायु के अनुकूल जो हमारी अतीत सभ्यता है उससे बढ़कर और कोई भी आदर्श हमारे अनुकूल होगा कि नहीं इसमें मुझे पूर्ण सन्देह है।......मेरी इच्छा भारतीय इतिहास के अप्रकाशित अंश में से उन प्रकाण्ड घटनाओं का दिग्दर्शन कराने की है जिन्होंने हमारी वर्तमान स्थिति को बनाने का बहुत प्रयत्न किया है।"

And in order to achieve this aim Prasad wrote several histori-cal plays, and 'Vishakh' may be called the first of that series. The plot of this play has been drawn from Kalhana's 'Raj-Tarangini' (Canto I, verses 197-276), and is connected with the decadent period of Buddhistic history.[2] Vishakh, the hero of the play, who is returning home after completing his education, seizes an opportunity of offering his services to Chandralekha (the heroine) who has been imprisoned

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1. See Introduction to the second-edition.
2. Introduction to the play.

In his next play Rajya-Shri (1915) [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] strength. In his introduction to the second edition of this play, Premi has called it his first historical [illegible] [illegible] that the first four plays (discussed above) were only experiments, and it is only in this play that Premi's art has come to a definite stand. The aim of the author in this play is to present Rajya-Shri's character[1] and he has derived the plot from Bana's 'Harsha-Charita' and [illegible]'s account of India. The comparative study of the first and the second editions of this play is very interesting and useful. the first edition bears great similarity with Sanskrit earlier drama. It gives the nandi and the bharat-vakya, and verses are also seen occasionally introduced in course of conversation. These things have been discarded with in the second edition. In the first edition, the death of Harsha's [illegible] has been shown, but that being not in conformity with historical findings, has been dropped in the second edition. In the second edition Premi has added one act (the fourth), a few more scenes and the characters of [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] and [illegible]. If compared with the first edition, the second edition gives greater evidence of skill in plot-construction and characterisation.

Six years after writing 'Rajya-Shri', Premi wrote his 'Vishakh' (1921). In the introduction to this play, the author writes —

[illegible]

And in order to achieve this end Premi wrote several historical plays, and 'Vishakh' may be called the first of that series. The plot of this play has been drawn from Kalhana's 'Raj-Tarangini' [illegible] [illegible], verses 197-[illegible], and is consistent with the accepted period of [illegible] history.[2] [illegible], the hero of the play, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

1. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
2. Introduction [illegible] [illegible]

by a haughty Bhikshu for trespassing his field. Vishakh approaches the King and succeeds in getting the girl released; the 'Vihar' of the Bhikshu is also ordered to be burnt. In course of time, Vishakh develops love for Chandralekha, and at last succeeds in marrying her.

Now the king (Nar Dev) takes fancy for Chandralekha, but the girl repulses his love. The king sends Maha-Pingal, his court-jester to abduct the girl for the satisfaction of king's lust, but the poor jester loses his life at the hands of Vishakh. At this the king orders his soldiers to fetch the girl by force; this leads to a public revolt; the palace of the king is set on fire, and in the scuffle the king is also hurt. The king now saves his life by begging pardon of the hero and the heroine; he further decides to become a Sadhu, and his son succeeds him.

Though somewhat maturer than previous dramas, 'Vishakh' also suffers from several defects. Firstly, the author has not shown sufficient dexterity in the construction of the plot;[1] moreover the play can be divided into two parts having little organic relation between them. In the first part the climax is reached by the consummation of marriage between the hero and the heroine. It is again disturbed by the interference of the king which serves as an anti-climax to the first part. Verse has also been used in conversation, and even the prose is rhyming at certain places; e.g. 'मिट्टी के वर्तन थोड़ी ही आंच में तड़क जाते हैं। नये पशु एक ही प्रहार से भड़क जाते हैं'; or 'तुम्हें प्रश्न करने का क्या अधिकार है! क्या आतिथ्य का यही प्रतिकार है' etc.etc.[2] No maturity has been shown in the power of characterisation. Frequent introduction of songs has also become very cheap and boring. Further, the tendency of making the language stiff and ornate is visible in this drama, which mats the natural effect of dialogue.

It is in fact from 'Ajat-Shatru' that we witness the real dramatic art of Prasad. The story of the play takes us back to the time of Lord Buddha. Bimbasar, the king of Magadh, has two queens - Vasavi and Chhalana. The latter is given to conspiracies, as a result of which her son Ajat-Shatru forces his father to abdicate his

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1. Dr. Jagannath Prasad:'Prasad Ke Natakon---' etc.page 226.
2. Ibid.

throne in his (Ajat's) favour. Vasavi, the faithful and devoted wife of Bimbasar, stands by her husband in this hour of need and distress. She accompanies him to the hermitage, and in order to enable her husband to give ample alms to the needy, she offers him the revenue of Kashi which she got from her father in dowry. At this a battle commences between Magadh and Kosal.

Intrigues are also going on at Kosal. Like Ajat Shatru, there too prince Viruddhak revolts against his father and murders Bandhul, the commander of Kosal army. Further we find that Vasavi's daughter Padmavati is married to Udayan, the king of Kaushambi; intri-gues are going on in the harem of Udayan also. In the end king Prasenjit of Kosal and Udayan of Kaushami jointly attach Magadh, and Ajat is taken a captive. In prison the Kosal princess Bajira falls in love with Ajat, and with the mediation of Vasavi, Ajat and Bajira are married. The story goes on further; later on a son is born to Ajat Shatru. Now having become a father himself Ajat realises the working of a father's mind; then he goes to his father Bimbasar and begs pardon of him.

'Ajat-Shatru' is the first play of that series of maturer dramas on which rests the great fame of Prasad. Although the plot of this play is very complicated and even confusing, still the author has shown great power in knitting it together. The characterization of this play shows greater skill than before; not only has the author powerfully described the outer struggle and conflict in this play, even the mental conflict has been successfully depicted in the characters of Bimbasar, Vasavi and others. The characters of Vasavi and Mallika have been portrayed in glowing colours, while Chhalana acts as the villain of the piece who is also responsible for the ignoble deeds of Ajat Shatru. The language of the play shows greater command of the author on it; at certain places the speeches of some of the characters (e.g. Bimbasar) become poetic and philosphic, which make it difficult for the common man to understand them on the stage. Pieces of poetry have been frequently and even unnecessarily interspersed, and in several cases (e.g. those of Gautam and some of Bimbasar) they have a mystical touch. The song of Bajira in her soliloquy in the prison (Act III Scene 2) is also a defect from the realistic point of view.

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Intrigues are also going on at Kosal. Like Ajat Shatru, there too prince Virudhak revolts against his father and [illegible] Bandhul, the commander of Kosal army. [illegible] Vasavi's daughter Padmavati is married to Udayan, the king of Kaushambi, and [illegible] going on in the harem of Udayan [illegible]. In the end King Prasenjit of Kosal and Udayan of Kaushambi jointly attack Magadh and Ajat is taken a prisoner. In prison the Kosal princess Bajira falls in love with Ajat, and with the mediation of Vasavi, Ajat and Bajira are married. [illegible] a son is born to Ajat Shatru. [illegible] becomes a father himself Ajat real[illegible] the feelings of a father [illegible] to his father Bimbasar and begs pardon of him.

'Ajat-Shatru' is the first play of [illegible] of Prasad [illegible] on which [illegible]. Although the plot of this play is very complicated and [illegible], still the author has shown great [illegible]. The characterisation [illegible] this play shows [illegible] not only [illegible] the author [illegible] and conflict in this play, [illegible] even the mental conflict [illegible] of Bimbasar, Vasavi [illegible]. The [illegible] of Vasavi and Mallika have been [illegible], while Chhalna [illegible] as the [illegible] for the [illegible] of Ajat Shatru. The language of the play [illegible] of the [illegible] (i.e. [illegible]) [illegible]

[illegible]

Next comes Prasad's 'Kamana' which though published in 1927, was written in 1923-24. It is an allegorical drama, and has been discuss-ed in a seperate chapter.[1]

In 'Nag-Yajna' (1926) Prasad takes us to the times of Janamejaya, the son of Parikshit who was the successor of the Pandavas. But although the play deals with a mythological plot, the author has treated it exactly in the style of his historical plays, and has tried to give the plot a historical colour instead of a mythological one.[2] The author has consulted various Puranas, Brahmanas and the Mahabharata for the plot of this drama, and has also added a little from his imagination too. The theme of this play is a struggle between two warring nations — the Aryas and the Nagas. The Aryan king (Janamejaya) has committed a crime by accidentally killing a Brahman boy. In order to expiate for his sin, he orders a 'Yajna' to be performed. In the meantime a conflict takes place between the Nagas and the Aryas, and the Aryan king orders for the massacre of the former. In the end a compromise is brought about between the two races by marrying Mani Mala, the Nag princess with Janamejaya, the Aryan king.

The plot of this play is also very complicated, but the playwright has taken great care in making it clear and well-constructed. The number of characters is very large, and the playwright has not been very successful in characterisation.[3] As in his other maturer plays, so here also Prasad hints at the conflict (between the Aryas and the Nagas) in the very opening scene. The play has been haphazardly divided into acts and scenes which mostly stand isolated from one another; they are series of static pictures which reduce the play to a melodrama.[4]

In his next play 'Skand-Gupta' (1928) Prasad turns to the Gupta period of Indian history and deals with various events of the life of the Gupta Emperor Skanda Gupta. At the death of Kumar-Gupta, one of his wives Anant Devi (the mother of Pur Gupta) tries to put an end to the life of Skanda Gupta's mother and thus to make the way smooth

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1. See Chapter XVI below. 2. See Introduction to the play
3. Dr. Jagannath Prasad: 'Prasad Ke Natakon --etc.' page 245.
4. Dr. Inder Nath Madan, 'Modern Hindi Literature' page 109.

for herself. But the timely arrival of Skanda Gupta saves her from Anant Devi, Now Skanda Gupta is proclaimed as king at Ujjayini and shortly after he defeats the Shakas and destroyes other enemy kings. Successive victories of Skanda kindle the fire of jealousy in the bosom of his step-mother Anant Devi, and she conspires with the Hunas for Skanda's destruction. As a result of the betrayal of the Magadha army under Bhatark, Skanda suffers a defeat at the hands of the Hunas; but the patriotic warriors again rally under Skanda and this time inflict a crushing defeat on the Hunas. Skanda Gupta takes the vow of life-long celibacy and Pur Gupta is appointed as heir-apparent.

From the point of view of dramatic art and technique, 'Skanda Gupta' is the best play of Prasad;[1] the playwright has shown great skill in plot-construction, characterisation and dialogue, and in the depiction of contemporary times and atmosphere. Moreover, we find a nice combination of the Indian and Western dramatic principles; firstly, in conformity with Western principles there is an abundance of action and conflict throughout the whole play; secondly, there is profuse flow of sentiment also in accordance with Indian theory. The playwright seems to have taken special pains to delineate the charact-ers of Skanda Gupta and Dev-Sena; he has made both these characters a combination of idealistic as well as realistic emotions. They are ideal in their national life with their strong feelings of nobility, patriotism, dutifulness and sacrifice. But, in their private life they are realistic with emotions and sentiments of an ordinary human being. The life of both these leading characters is a story of constant struggle between Duty and Emotion.

In 'Chandra Gupta' (1931) the playwright has depicted the rise and growth of the Mauryan dynasty. The play deals with all the important events of Chandra Gupta Maurya's life, including his meet-ing with Alexander (at the time of the latter's invasion of India), his destruction of the Nanda dynesty, and his victory over Seleukos (and his subsequent marriage with Cornelia). As the plot selected by the author is very lengthy, there is a great rush of events and

1. Dr. Jagannath Prasad: 'Prasad Ke Natakon---etc.' page 89.

the execution of the theme has, therefore, been not very artistic.[1] Again the author has culled as many as thirty characters, and male and female, in order to become comprehensive in historical details. Thus, while the play succeeds as an objective treatment of historical facts, it has not much value as a piece of dramatic literature.[2] Due to a heavy cast, characterisation has not been very thorough and perfect; still the characters of Chanakya, Chandragupta, Sinharana, Alaka, Kalyani and Malvika have been drawn to some extent. Moreover, certain scenes and characters have been unnecessarily added just to create story-interest.[3]

Also there are some inconsistencies of characterisation; in this play we find that the same brave Chandra Gupta who single-handed could release Chanakya from the heavily guarded prison of the Nandas (Act I Scene 7) falls down senseless due to fatigue from walking (Act I Scene 10) while the poor Brahman Chanakya is still hail and hearty, and goes away to fetch water for Chandra Gupta. The reason why the playwright has made Chandra Gupta senseless is that he wants Seleukos to save his life from the lion, so that, in the end Chandra Gupta should remember Seleukos's debt of gratitude and should spare his life in return.

Moreover the play has become enormously lengthy for one performance. It includes the events of some 25 years, as it begins shortly before Alexander's invasion (327 B.C.) and closes after Chandra Gupta's treaty with Seleukos (303 B.C.). It does not look nice to see in one and the same play, the leading characters quite young in the beginning and then seeing them grown old by the end but still behaving in the manner of the young. It would have been better had the author ended his play after the overthrow of the Nanda dynasty by Chandra Gupta, and treated Seleukos episode in a separate play. That would have made both the plays suited for stage-performance, and would have also removed the flaw of seeing the characters young and old in the same play. Further, we find that the last (fourth) act of this play is the lengthiest of all the acts; as a rule succeeding acts should go on shortening and the number of scenes should go on decreasing; but Prasad has seriously violated this rule in this case.

1. Dr. I.N.Madan: Modern Hindi Literature p.108. 2. Ibid. 3. See page 170-71 below.

In 'Chandra Gupta' the playwright has also given vent to his patriotic feeling[1] at several places.

'Dhruva-Swamini' (1934), the last play of Prasad, is atonce a historical drama as well as a problem play. It has three acts, not sub-divided into scenes; and its plot is based on 'Devi-Chandra-guptam' of Vishakhadatta. Ram Gupta, the weak successor of Samudra Gupta, is not very happy with his wife Dhruva-Swamini, and has also suspicious about her love. At the same time, he is very weak, so that when the Shaka invader demands the surrender of Dhruva-Swamini, he readily agrees.

In vain does Dhruva-Swamini appeal to Ram Gupta's sense of honour and selfrespect. In the end Chandra Gupta comes to her help; he goes with her to the Shaka camp and slays the Shaka chief there. On their return Ram Gupta tries to murder Chandra Gupta, but is him-self murdered by a subordinate chief. Now Chandra Gupta becomes the king and marries Dhruva-Swamini.

In this historical drama, Prasad has introduced the eternal problem of woman and marriage. Ram Gupta and Dhruva-Swamini are not satisfied with their marriage; moreover Ram Gupta fails to discharge his duty (as a true husband) of protecting Dhruva-Swamini from danger and distress. He rather denies his duties of a true husband towards Dhruva-Swamini in the following conversation —

ध्रुवस्वामिनी — "......मैं जानना चाहती हूं कि किसने सुखदुःख में मेरा साथ न छोड़ने की प्रतिज्ञा अग्निवेदी के सामने की है ?"

रामगुप्त — (चारों ओर देखकर) किसने की है, कोई बोलता क्यों नहीं ?

ध्रुव० — तो क्या मैं राजाधिराज रामगुप्त की महादेवी नहीं हूं ?

राम० — क्यों नहीं ? परन्तु रामगुप्त ने ऐसी कोई प्रतिज्ञा न की होगी। मैं तो उस दिन द्राक्षासव में डुबकी लगा रहा था। पुरोहितों ने न जाने क्या २ पढ़ा दिया होगा। उन सब बातों का बोझ मेरे सिर पर ? (सिर हिलाकर) कदापि नहीं।" (Act I)

Inspite of the entreaties and tears of Dhruva-Swamini, Ram Gupta orders her to go to the Shaka chief, thus proving himself to be unfit for her. Chandra Gupta, on the other hand acts bravely and heroically and he saves both Dhruva-Swamini and the Gupta kingdom. At this the Jury (राजसभा) gives verdict against Ram Gupta, dethrones

1. See page 166 below.

him and makes Chandra Gupta the legal successor of Samudra Gupta; the Jury further declares the marriage of Ram Gupta and Dhruva-Swamini illegal, permits her to sever connections with Ram Gupta, and she is legitimately married to Chandra Gupta.

In this way Prasad has raised two problems in this play and has solved them boldly. Firstly, he permits divorce under special circumstances as we listen in the following words —

पुरोहित — "......जिसे अपनी स्त्री को दूसरे की अंकगामिनी बनने के लिये भेजने में कुछ संकोच नहीं वह क्लीव नहीं तो और क्या है? मैं स्पष्ट कहता कि धर्मशास्त्र रामगुप्त से ध्रुवस्वामिनी को मोक्ष की आज्ञा देता है।

परिषद् के सब लोग — अनार्य, पतित और क्लीव रामगुप्त साम्राज्य के पवित्र राज-सिंहासन पर बैठने का अधिकारी नहीं। (Act III).

The second problem solved by Prasad is that when a weak king fails to save the interests or prestige of the nation, he should be dethroned.

Art and Technique of Prasad

The basis of Prasad's plays is essentially cultural; a strong revivalist tendency is noticeable not only in his leading historical plays, but even in his 'Kamana' which is an allegorical drama. "When the age is one of wounded sensibilities, with all the vitality of life on the ebb, the soul must turn towards the past, in order to find the contentment so necessary to the cravings of its emotional nature. And of all the varied period which such a past has to offer that which affords the greatest satisfaction will be the first to be explored."[1]

At the time of Prasad the country was pulsating with nationalistic ideas. The genius of the talented playwright was not satisfied with the contemporary political and social conditions of his slave country, and he sought to revive the golden post in his dramas. With this purpose in view he ransacked ancient Indian history in search of suitable themes for his plays, and mostly selected those periods of history when Indian culture was at the zenith of its glory (e.g. Chandra Gupta Maurya, Skanda Gupta, Harsha etc.).

1. Leguious & Czamian: A History of English Literature, page 940.

There is one important point to note regarding Prasad's plays. Although Prasad was not the first playwright who laid the foundations of historical drama, yet he is certainly the first historical playwright who undertake careful historical research for collecting the plot of his plays. Before him, so many dramatists (e.g. Bharatendu Harishchandra, Radha Krishna Das, Badri Nath Bhatta etc.) had written historical dramas; but they did not base their plot on a critical examination of all available material; they mostly depended on the prevalent stories or traditional histories of their historical personages. But Prasad made a critical use of all histroical researches, archaeological and literary evidence for constructing the plots of his plays, as is evident from his introductions to various plays (e.g. 'Chandra Gupta' 'Ajat-Shatru', 'Nag Yajna', 'Dhruva-Swamini' etc.).

So, as Prasad culled his plot after historical researches we find that the main characters and events of his plays are mostly historical; but while the author has stuck to historical details for the most part, he has also made appropriate use of his own power of imagination and creation. With the help of his imaginative power, he has infused greater charm and beauty in his plays than what a strict adherence to historical details could have given them. Thus, for example, in his 'Chandra Gupta' while the principal characters like Chandra Gupta, Chanakya, Alexander, Seleukos etc. are historical, characters like Alaka, Malvika etc. are the result of author's creative genius; the same is the case with Dev Sena, Jay Mala, and Vijaya etc of 'Skanda Gupta', Damini and Sarama of 'Nag-Yajna' and so on. By creating various female characters Prasad has provided occasions of relief and tenderness in his dramas of adventure, war and bloodshed. But in addition to female characters, the author has created a few male characters also like Shikhar Swami (in 'Dhruva-Swamini'), Vikat-ghosh (in 'Rajya-Shri'), and Maha-Pingal (in 'Vishakh') etc. Besides creating new characters, Prasad has made other changes also in characters, as for example in his 'Ajat Shatru' he has identified Magandhi with Shyama, and Viruddhak with Shailendra.[1]

Like characters, certain events and situations have also been

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1. Dr. Jagannath Prasad: 'Prasad Ke Natakon ---etc." page 256-7.

created by Prasad from his fancy; this has been generally done either to emphasize any quality of a character or to enhance the dramatic effect or to connect a broken link of events; in this way we find in 'Chandra-Gupta' the scene (Act I Scene 7) where we see Chanakya in prison and Chandra Gupta releasing him from his bonds is the invention of the playwright; similar other inventions are the scene where Chandra Gupta saves Cornelia from Philips (Act II, Scene 2) and the scene where Chandra Gupta is saved from a lion by Seleukos (Act I Scene 10) etc.etc.

Besides creating such characters, scenes and situations in his historical plays, Prasad has written two plays— 'Kamana' and 'Ek Ghunt' — where the entire plot is original and imaginary. In this way Prasad has given ample evidence of originality even though most of his plays are historical.

Another characteristic feature of Prasad's plays is that they have abundance of conflict (संघर्ष) which is the very life of drama according to Western principles.[1] Not only that the conflict, which is an essential feature of a successful play, is present in all the famous plays of Prasad, the reference to it is also made in the very opening scene of the plays. For example the struggle that goes on between the Aryas and the Nagas, and which forms the theme of 'Nag Yajna' has been hinted at in the very first scene of the play—

सरमा — बहन मनसा, मैं तो आज तुम्हारी बात सुनकर चकित होगई।

मनसा — क्यों ? क्या तुम ने यही समझ रखा था कि नागजाति सदैव से इसी गिरी अवस्था में है ? क्या इस विश्व के रंगमंच पर नागों ने कोई स्पृहणीय अभिनय नहीं किया ? क्या इनका अतीत भी इनके वर्तमान की भांति अंधकारपूर्ण था।

Similarly in 'Dhruva Swamini', the very opening speech of Dhruva-Swamini makes a reference to the conflict between humility and haughtiness, which has been described in detail in the play itself—

ध्रुवस्वामिनी — (सामने पर्वत की ओर देखकर) सीधा तना हुआ, अपने प्रभुत्व की साकार कठोरता, अभ्रभेदी उन्मुक्त शिखर! और इन क्षुद्र कोमल निरीह लताओं और पौधों को इसके चरणों में लोटना ही चाहिए न! etc.etc.

In the same way in 'Ajat Shatru' the contending qualities of the characters of Ajat-Shatru, Chhalana, Vasavi and Padmavati, which

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1. Milton Marx: Enjoyment of Drama, page 45 ff.

are responsible for the development of the play have been hinted at in the very opening scene.

In the same way the opening scene of 'Chandra Gupta' is very significant and forceful. In this scene the playwright has introduced five important characters of the play — Chanakya, Chandra Gupta Sinharan, Ambhik and Alaka — and has also thrown sufficient hints on their character and nature. The exchange of affectionate glances between Alaka and Sinharan (in that very scene) is also very dramatic and signifies to the rising emotions of love in two youthful but patriotic hearts.

Having cast a hint at the conflict in the opening scene, the plot of the Prasad's plays develops in such a manner that the conflict goes on deepening and widening, and different dramatic events and situations rise from the action and reaction of this conflict. Looking at the plot of Prasad's plays we find that although in earlier plays it is comparatively simple, still it becomes very complex and complicated in 'Ajat Shatru', 'Skanda Gupta' and 'Chandra Gupta'. In his plays Prasad has generally introduced more than one plots, which get very much confused as they develop. The conflict, which is the essential feature of Prasad's plays, does not run across a single simple line, but takes a meandering course and passes through different curves. For instance, in 'Rajya-Shri' the main story is that of Rajya-Shri, but the account of Surama and Shanti Bhikshu also develops alongside of it, and both the plots get interlinked at a later stage. In 'Nag-Yajna' the sub-plots of Damini and Uttank, and of Sarama and Manavak complicate the main plot. Still more complicated is the plot of 'Ajat-Shatru', in which some half a dozen plots develop side by side. On one side in Magadh, Ajat Shatru and his mother Chhalana force Bimbasar to vacate the throne for Ajat, and the king , having acted accordingly, retires to the forest with his faithful wife Vasavi. On the other side prince Viruddhak of Kosal revolts against his father Prasen Jit, is exiled by the latter, and then he returns to Kashi in the guise of a robber (Shailendra) again to kindle the fire of revolt there. Thirdly a conspiracy goes on between the queens of Udayan at Kaushambi; Magandhi cleverly instigates Udayan against Padmavati, and herself disappears after

setting fire to her own palace. She reappears in the guise of a prostitute (Shyama), is strangled by Viruddhak, but is revived by Buddha and she become Amrapali. Fourth plot is that of Mallika who is loved by Viruddhak but is married to Bandhul, who is later murdered by the former. There are still more sub-plots which complicate the main plot. One story moves forward, gets entangled with a second story, and then gives rise to another story; one character transforms into another, and one situation complicates the other.

Similarly in 'Chandra-Gupta' we find several plots running side by side; but here we find one difference. In this play different plots run on separately and do not generally complicate one another by getting entangled. The main story in this play is obviously that of Chandra Gupta and Chanakya versus Nand and Rakshas; but there are several other stories, e.g. of Alaka and Sinharan, of Rakshas and Suvasini, of Chandra Gupta and Kalyani, of Chandra Gupta and Cornelia and so on. And we find that although Prasad, with his masterly skill, has greatly succeeded in properly handling these different plots together, yet a number of defects have crept up in this play.[1]

Not only is the plot of these plays very complicated, the number of characters is also very large in them. But although the characters are very large in number, yet each one of them does not possess his individual distinctive qualities; most of them can be divided into ~~a few~~ classes and types due to similarity of nature and conduct, and we find the repetition of these types in almost all the plays.[2] For instance there is one character present in almost all these plays who stands as an embodiment of nobility, virtue and forgiveness; ~~and who~~ he helps in bringing about the victory of virtue over evil and moulding an ignoble or weak character into a noble or strong one, or introducing a spirit of peace, happiness and compromise in an atmosphere of intrigue and quarrel; in certain cases this character is a saint as Premanand in 'Vishakh', Gautam in 'Ajat Shatru', Divakar Mitra in 'Rajya-Shri' Vyas in 'Nag Yajna' etc; in other cases we find the glimpses of this character in a woman (e.g. Deva Sena, Alaka, Malavika) who helps in raising another falling character.

1. See pages 169-72 below. 2. 'Prasad Ji Ki Kala' edited by B. Gulab Rai page 117.

[illegible] to her own [illegible]. The [illegible] in the [illegible] of a [illegible] ([illegible]), is [illegible] by Viruddhak, but is [illegible] by [illegible] and she becomes [illegible]. Fourth plot is that of Mallika who is loved by Viruddhak but is [illegible] to Bandhula, who is later murdered by the former. There are still more sub-plots which complicate the main plot. One story moves forward, gets entangled with a second story, and then gives rise to another story; one character [illegible] into another, and one situation complicates the other.

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Again we find great similarity in the characters of Chandra Gupta Maurya, Skanda Gupta, Chandra Gupta (of 'Dhruva-Swamini'), Harsha etc; these characters are धीरोदात्त and are also actuated by ideals of patriotism and sacrifice in their adventures. The character of Chhalana (in 'Ajat Shatru') has again much affinity with that of Anant Devi (in 'Skanda Gupta') in her dexterity in and fondness for intrigue, and the character of Shanti Bhikshu (= Vikatghosh; in 'Rajya Shri') is very much similar to that of Viruddhak (later on Shailendra in 'Ajat Shatru') in adventure and ambition.

Further we find that in the delineation of his principal characters Prasad has mostly followed the classical principle of idealism; not only that Prasad has mostly followed the classical injunction that नाटकं प्रख्यातवृत्तं स्यात् पंचसन्धिसमन्वितम्, but his characterisation is also idealistic in accordance with classical practice. His leading characters like Chandra Gupta Maurya, Sinharan, Skanda Gupta, Chandra Gupta (of 'Dhuruva-Swamini') Parnadatta, Bandhu Varma etc. are mostly idealistic in heroism, courage, patriotism, nobility etc. But idealism has not been imposed upon these characters forcibly;[1] on the other hand it gradually becomes evident and clear from the various actions and emotions of these characters. In fact many of Prasad's characters (e.g. Skanda Gupta Dev-Sena, Chandra Gupta Maurya, Sinharan etc.) are nice combination of the realistic and idealistic emotions; in certain human qualities (like those of love etc.) they are realistic human beings, but gradually they strive for idealism and mostly succeed in their effort; so they rise from a realistic level to idealistic heights,[2] and this is clear in certain cases (e.g. Dev-Sena, Skanda Gupta) from the study of the constant mental struggle in the minds of these characters between realism and idealism, between sentiment and duty. In the character of Dev-Sena we find that although inspired by idealistic sentiments she rejected Skanda's request for marriage, yet as an ordinary human being, strong feelings of attachment towards Skanda Gupta again and again rise in her bosom; even till the last scene of the play she has not overcome these realistic emotions, which we find her suppressing with the following words —

1. Pt. Jagdish Narayan Dikshit 'Prasad Ke Natakiy Patra', Sahitya Niketan Kanpur page 4.

2. Ibid.

देवसेना — हृदय की कोमल कल्पना! सो जा! जीवन में जिसकी संभावना नहीं, जिसे द्वार पर आये हुए लौटा दिया था, उसके लिये पुकार मचाना क्या तेरे लिये कोई अच्छी बात है? आज जीवन के भावी सुख, आशा और आकांक्षा — सबसे मैं विदा लेती हूं। (Act V, last scene)

Even the character of an adamant person like Chanakya is not altogether free from softer emotions of human mind, as appears from his conversation with Suvasini (in 'Chandragupta' Act IV scene 3), and the following words of the latter --

सुवासिनी — यह क्या विष्णुगुप्त, तुम संसार को अपने वश में करने का संकल्प रखते हो। फिर अपने को नहीं? देखो दर्पण लेकर — तुम्हारी आंखों में तुम्हारा यह कौनसा नवीन चित्र है।

Prasad's idealistic characterisation of his leading characters becomes more conspicuous and impressive by a comparative study of different rival characters. We can divide the rival characters in two main categories: firstly those (like Bhatark, Shanti Bhikshu, Sharv-Nag, Takshak, Nar Dev, Viruddhak etc.) who adopt the path of evil due to circumstances or their inherent nature, but attain to the path of virtue and nobility in the end either under circumstances or due to contact with some noble character.[1] To the second category belong those characters (like Prapanch Buddhi, Kashyap, Vijaya, Nand, Dev Gupta, Ram Gupta etc.) who are given to evil, violence, deceit etc. from the beginning to the end and who are not reformed even till their death. As in Dev- Sena's words --

"पवित्रता की माप है मलिनता, सुख का आलोचक है दुःख, पुण्य की कसौटी है पाप" (Act II Scene I)

So the ideal character of principal persons becomes more radiant when compared with these rival characters. In the same way in female characters also while on the one hand we find ideal ladies like Dev-Sena, Mallika, Rajya-Shri, Vasavi etc, who are embodiments of different noble qualities, at the same time we meet mean intriguing ladies like Chhalana and Anant Devi who aim at their personal benefit only.

As Prasad was essentially a poet and a philosopher, so we find that some of his leading characters have shared this quality with their author; they also, on several occasions behave in an extraordinary manner, sometimes as poets, on others as philosphers. For instance, in 'Rajya-Shri' we find the queen very different from ordinary queens; she is very philosphic and thoughtful, as we see from a few of her utterances—

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1. Pt. Jagdish Narayan Dikshit: 'Prasad Ke Natakiy Patra', Sahitya Niketan Kanpur page 6-7.

राज्यश्री – सुखी मनुष्य! तुम मरने से इतना डरते हो। भग्न हृदयों से पूछो – वे मृत्यु की कितनी सुखद कल्पना करते हैं।

(Act II Scene 7)

राज्यश्री – अस्त होते हुए अभिमानी भास्कर से पूछो – वह समुद्र में गिरने को कितना उत्सुक है। पतंग-सदृश निराश हृदय से पूछो कि जल जाने में वह अपना सौभाग्य समझता है या नहीं. etc.

(Act II Scene 7)

राज्यश्री – मैं दुखी हूं, दस्यु! तुम धन चाहते हो, पर वह मेरे पास नहीं। इस विस्तीर्ण विश्व में सुख मेरे लिये नहीं; पर जीवन? आह! जितनी सांसें चलनी हैं, वे तो चलकर ही रुकेंगी। तुम मनुष्य होकर हिंस्र पशुओं को क्यों लज्जित कर रहे हो! इस श्मशान को कुरेद कर जली हड्डियों के अतिरिक्त मिलेगा क्या?

(Act III. Scene 2)

Again mark the philosophical bent of mind of a king in 'Ajat Shatru', – बिम्बसार – यदि मैं सम्राट न होकर किसी विनम्र लता के कोमल किशलयों के झुरमुट में एक अधखिला फूल होता और संसार की दृष्टि मुझ पर न पड़ती – पवन की किसी लहर को सुरभित करके धीरे से उस पाले में चू पड़ता – तो इतना भीषण चीत्कार इस विश्व में न मचता। इस अस्तित्व को अनस्तित्व के साथ मिलाकर कितना सुखी होता। etc. etc. (Act III Scene 9)

Moreover, in case of certain characters who are in fact inspired by idealistic emotions we find that revenge or retaliation (प्रतिहिंसा) takes the form of mercy and forgiveness; for instance, in 'Nag- Yajna' Astika, whose father Jaratkaru had been killed at the hands of Janamejay tries to bring about reconciliation between the Aryas and the Nagas and does not wreak vengeance on Janamejaya for his offence as an ordinary man would have done. Again Sarama (in the same play) retaliates her own insult as that of her son at the hands of the Aryas by making a request for the marriage of the Naga princess (Mani Mala) with the Arya King (Janamejaya) – in order to bring about a compromise between the long contending nations. In the same way in 'Vishakh' Chandralekha saves the son of the king, although the king had put her to so much trouble. In 'Ajat Shatru' it is Vasavi who goes to rescue Ajat Shatru when imprisoned by her father, although she and her husband had suffered so much at the hands of Ajat Shatru; and Mallika forgives Viruddhak, although the latter had killed her husband.

Again in these dramas we find some evil characters suddenly changing their mind and turning into noble ones, either at the advice of some great man or under the pressure of circumstance; thus in 'Nag-Yajna', Ashva-Sen who is drunken and at the point of violating the modesty of Damini (Act II Scene 4) is rebuked by his sister

Manimala, so that he at once gives up that ignoble idea, assumes heroism and marches off to the battlefield. In 'Ajat Shatru' queen Magandhi, first working as a prostitute (Shyama) suddenly changes to Amrapali at the advice of Gautam and takes to the path of service and virtue (Act III Scene 7). In 'Rajya-Shri' Vikat Ghosh puts Rajya Shri to great torment, but when forgiven by her he abandons his criminal life and becomes a Bhikshu (Act IV Scene 4). From realistic point of view, such changes in the minds of characters appear unnatural and inconsistant; but in romantic dramas changes of this kind are not inappropriate and they even lend charm to the character.

Psycho-analysis of characters, which has become a regular feature in the problem plays of today (especially those of Lakshmi Narayan Mishra and Govind Das Seth) is not very abundant in Prasad's plays. Prasad's Plays have an excess of external conflict, i.e.conflict between two different persons or between contending qualities of different persons; still in certain cases the internal conflict i.e. conflict between two contending emotions of the mind of one and the same character, has also been very nicely depicted by Prasad. For instance in 'Dhruva- Swamini', the queen who had decided to commit suicide as Ram Gupta had resolved to surrender her to the Shaka chief feels a change in her mind after embracing Chandra Gupta, and decides to live on. In the following soliloquy we find a nice psychological study of the queen's mind and the conflict between different emotions of her mind --

ध्रुवस्वामिनी — कितना अनुभूतिपूर्ण था वह एक क्षण का आलिंगन! कितने सन्तोष से भरा था। नियति ने अज्ञात भाव से मानो लू से तपी हुई वसुधा को क्षितिज के निर्जन में सायंकालीन शीतल आकाश से मिला दिया हो...... तो भी मरना नहीं।.... कुमार! तुमने वही किया जिसे मैं बचाती रही। तुम्हारे उपकार और स्नेह की वर्षा से मैं भीगी जा रही हूं। ओह, (हृदय पर उंगली रखकर) इस वक्षस्थल में दो हृदय हैं क्या? जब अन्तरंग 'हां' कहना चाहता है तब ऊपरी मन 'ना' क्यों कहला देता है? (Act I page 32)

In 'Ajat Shatru' we find similar conflict of internal emotions in the characters of Bimbasar, Vasavi and Mallika. Mental conflict gets more deep and frequent in the characters of Dev Sena and Skanda Gupta in 'Skanda Gupta'. This conflict of different emotions is so strong in Dev-Sena that even her close friend Jay Mala is not definite in her readings of the mind of Dev-Sena, as she says —

जयमाला — "तू उदास है कि प्रसन्न, कुछ समझ में नहीं आता। जब तू गाती है — तब तेरे भीतर की रागिनी रोती है। और जब हंसती है तब जैसे विषाद की प्रस्तावना होती है etc. (Act III)

The double nature of her mind is hinted at by Dev Sena herslf also—
"नीरव जीवन और एकान्त व्याकुलता, कचोटने का सुख सुन्दर होता है। जब हृदय में रुदन का स्वर उठता है, तभी संगीत की वीणा मिला लेती हूँ। उसी में सब छिप जाता है।" (Act III)

The conflict between Duty and Love reaches it climax when Dev-Sena says the following words to Skanda Gupta —

देवसेना — आप को अकर्मण्य बनाने के लिये देवसेना जीवित न रहेगी। सम्राट, क्षमा हो। इस हृदय में.... आह! कहना ही पड़ा, स्कंदगुप्त को छोड़कर न कोई दूसरा आया और न वह जायेगा। अभिमानी भक्त के समान निष्काम होकर मुझे उसी की उपासना करने दीजिये; उसे कामना के भंवर में फंसाकर कलुषित न कीजिये। नाथ! मैं आपकी ही हूं, मैंने अपने को दे दिया है, अब उसके बदले कुछ लिया नहीं चाहती। (Act V)

While Prasad has been very successful in portraying his principal male characters, it cannot be denied that he has been even more successful or masterly in his portraiture of leading female characters. Almost in every play Prasad has introduced one or two such female characters as play a very significant part in the drama; the atmosphere and the plot of the plays receive great force from female characters. Some of the plays are verily dominated by female characters, as by Chhalana and Mallika in 'Ajat-Shatru', by Rajya Shri in 'Rajya Shri', by Anant Devi, Dev Sena and others in 'Skanda Gupta'. Most of the leading female characters (e.g. Dev Sena, Malavika, Mallika, Rajya Shri, Vasavi, Alaka etc.) are embodiments of affection, self-restraint, nobility, sacrifice, forgiveness and patriotism, while a few of them (e.g. Chhalana, Anant Devi, Magandhi etc.) are mean and given to conspiracies for worldly prosperity and ambitious. In the conversation between Dirgh-Karayan and Shaktimati (in 'Ajat Shatru' Act III Scene 4) Prasad has given a vivid description of woman's nature, and her contrast with man's nature; e.g.

दीर्घकारायण — स्त्रियों के संगठन में, और उनके शारीरिक और प्राकृतिक विकास में ही, एक परिवर्तन है — जो स्पष्ट बतलाता है कि वे शासन कर सकती हैं, परन्तु अपने हृदय पर। वे अधिकार जमा सकती हैं उन मनुष्यों पर — जिन्होंने समस्त विश्व पर अधिकार किया हो..... तुम्हारे (स्त्री) राज्य की सीमा विस्तृत है, और पुरुष की संकीर्ण। कठोरता का उदाहरण है पुरुष, और कोमलता का विश्लेषण है — स्त्री जाति। पुरुष क्रूरता है तो स्त्री करुणा है — जो अन्तर्जगत का उच्चतम विकास है; जिसके बल पर समस्त सदाचार ठहरे हुए हैं। इसीलिये प्रकृति ने उसे इतना सुन्दर और मनमोहक आवरण दिया है — रमणी का रूप है।" etc etc

In the same way, contrast between man's nature and woman's nature has been emphasized in the conversation of Dhatusen and Matrigupta in 'Skanda Gupta' (Act I).

Another notable feature of Prasad's characters is the significant part played by 'Niyati' or Providence in their life. We find 'Niyati' hovering round Prasad's leading characters, who feel themselves simply carrying out the commands and dictates of Destiny. Prasad's important characters make frequent references to 'Niyati' and attribute their success or failure to it, as we find from the utterances of राज्यश्री & देवसेना quoted above and from the following utterances —

जनमेजय — सचमुच पुरुष प्रकृति का अनुचर और नियति का दास है। ('Nag-Yajna', Act I scene 7)

व्यास — दंभ और अहंकार से पूर्ण मनुष्य अदृष्टशक्ति के क्रीड़ा कन्दुक हैं। अंध नियति कर्तव्य मद से मत्त मनुष्यों की कर्म-शक्ति को अनुचरी बनाकर अपना कार्य करती है।
('Nag-Yajna', Act III scene 1)

~~राज्यश्री~~ मागन्धी — (आप ही आप) — वाह री नियति। कैसे कैसे दृश्य देखने में आये — कभी बैलों को चारा देते देते हाथ नहीं थकते थे, कभी अपने हाथों से जल का पात्र तक उठाकर पीने से संकोच होता था, कभी शील का बोझा एक पैर भी महल से बाहर चलने से रोकता था और कभी निर्लज्ज गणिका का आमोद मनोनीत हुआ। etc. etc.
('Ajat-Shatru', Act III scene 7)

But inspite of having full faith in 'Niyati', Prasad's characters do not sit idle like the Lotos-Eaters of Tennyson, waiting for the hand of Providence to support them or destroy them. They, on the other hand, descend on the highly busy stage of the world, take vigorous part in the battle of life and sometimes achieve surprising success.

But there are certain leading characters like Chanakya who are much above the dread of or regard for Niyati. They possess so much self-confidence and firm will that they appear to be masters of their Destiny. Not only do they rise themselves with their firm will and integrity of character, but they raise others too along with themselves.

Coming to dialogue we can say that it must serve two purposes in a play; it should help in proper characterisation of the dramatis personae and should also help in the development of the plot. Not only that; the right skill and beauty of dialogue lies in the fact that the maximum purpose should be served with minimum words, and that no

words should be wasted. In Prasad's plays we generally find these purposes served by dialogue; e.g.

ध्रुवस्वामिनी — ओह, तो मेरा कोई रक्षक नहीं। (ठहरकर) नहीं मैं अपनी रक्षा स्वयं करूंगी। मैं उपहार में देने की वस्तु शीतलमणि नहीं हूं। मुझमें रक्त की तरल लालिमा है। मेरा हृदय उष्ण है, और उसमें आत्म-सम्मान की ज्योति है। उसकी रक्षा मैं ही करूंगी।"

(Dhruva-Swamini, Act I)

While these words of Dhruva-Swamini make reference to the serious situation of the plot, they also strongly reflect the outstanding traits of her character like self-respect, courage, heroism and self-support. In the same way the dialogues of the opening scenes of 'Chandra Gupta', 'Ajat Shatru', 'Skand Gupta' etc. are very appropriate and significant. They serve the greatest purpose with minimum words; in 'Chandra-Gupta' this conversation reflects the inherent qualities of the characters of Chandra Gupta, Chanakya, Alaka, Sinharan and Ambhik and also anticipates the conflict that is to rise from their distinctive qualities and at the same time leads the plot further. The same purpose is served in 'Ajat Shatru' and 'Skand-Gupta' and such examples of conversation are quite abundant in all the plays.

Moreover we find that, in most cases the dialogue is natural and appropriate to the occasion; it is swift or slow, delicate or forceful, timid or heroic as the situation demands. Examples of force-ful and heroic dialogue can be found in 'Skanda Gupta' in the scenes named गांधार की घाटी (Act III) कुभा के क्षेत्र में (Act III) and राजसभा (Act II) etc., in 'Chandra Gupta' in Act II scene 10 (of the fifth edition) and several other places. Examples of sweet and slow-moving dialogues are found in 'Skand Gupta' in the last scene (Act V), in the conversation between Dev Sena and Jay Mala in the garden (Act III), in 'Chandra Gupta' in Act IV Scene 9 (of the fifth edition) etc. One or two instances of emotional and forceful speech may be quoted here; e.g.

कमला — कौन कहता है तुम अकेले हो? समग्र संसार तुम्हारे साथ है। स्वानुभूति को जाग्रत करो। यदि भविष्यत् से डरते हो कि तुम्हारा पतन ही समीप है, तो तुम उस अनिवार्य स्रोत से लड़ जाओ। तुम्हारे प्रचण्ड और विश्वासपूर्ण पदाघात से विन्ध्य के समान कोई शैल उठ खड़ा होगा, जो उस विघ्न स्रोत को लौटा देगा। राम और कृष्ण के समान क्या तुम भी अवतार नहीं हो सकते? etc. etc. ('Skanda Gupta', Act IV)

Or again, in 'Chandra Gupta' (Act I, Scene 7) the following speech of Chanakya in prison —

चाणक्य — .... एक बार निकलने पाता तो दिखा देता कि इन दुर्बल हाथों में साम्राज्य उलटने की शक्ति है और ब्राह्मण के कोमल हृदय में कर्तव्य के लिये प्रलय की आंधी चला देने की भी कठोरता है। जकड़ी हुई लौह शृंखला! एक बार तू फूलों की माला बन जा और मैं मदोन्मत्त विलासी के समान तेरी सुन्दरता को भंग कर दूं। ..... तब मैं आज से प्रण करता हूं कि दया किसी से न मांगूंगा, और अधिकार तथा अवसर मिलने पर किसी पर न करूंगा ...... मैं प्रलय के समान अबाध गति और कर्तव्य में इन्द्र के वज्र के समान भयानक बनूंगा।

But, in addition to appropriate dialogue, we find that on several occasions the conversation has become very lengthy or philosophical etc. and soliloquies also, in certain cases, have become very lengthy; these we have discussed under 'Defects'.[1]

Adding a word about the diction of Prasad's plays we find that in all his maturer plays Prasad has made use of one language through-out for all characters. He has used high Hindi often full of hard Tatsam words, and all his characters, whether Indian or alien, high or low, men or women use the same language. Not only that the language is generally hard for the common audience to understand in performance, sometimes the prose of Prasad's plays reaches poetical pitch.

In addition to the use of poetical prose and emotional dialogue, Prasad has inserted numerous songs dripping with emotion, at appropriate places in his plays. Songs have been so frequently introduced by Prasad, and in certain cases they are so lengthy that they have become a defect.[2] Although any character of these plays may resort to music on a suitable occasion, yet some characters are extraordinarily fond of singing (e.g. Magandhi of 'Ajat Shatru', Surama of 'Rajya Shri' etc). The significance of Prasad's songs is that while they are full of emotions and are melodious, at the same time they throw a flood of light on the personality of the character and also deal with the plot. For instance the following song of Surama (in 'Rajya Shri' Act II Scene 6) is very emotional and also reflects the mind of the singer-

सुरमा — ...... संभाले कोई कैसे प्यार
मचल मचल उठता है, चंचल
भर लाता है आंखों में जल
विह्वल कर, चलता है उसपर
लिये व्यथा का भार
संभाले कोई कैसे प्यार।

1. See pages 170-71 below. 2. See pages 169-70 below.

Deeply emotional and artistic are again the songs of Dev-Sena; in her songs we find a clear picture of her character, and the strong conflict between emotions of love and those of Duty and Sacrifice; and this conflict has made her songs very pathetic; e.g.

आह! वेदना मिली विदाई!
मैंने भ्रमवश जीवन-संचित,
मधुकरियों की भीख लुटाई।
छलछल थे संध्या के श्रमकण,
आंसू से गिरते थे प्रतिक्षण।
मेरी यात्रा पर लेती थी —
नीरवता अनन्त अंगड़ाई।
. . . .
चढ़कर मेरे जीवन रथ पर,
प्रलय चल रहा अपने पथ पर,
मैंने निज दुर्बल पद-बल पर,
उससे हारी-होड़ लगाई। etc. (Skanda-Gupta, Act V, last scene)

The following song of Padmavati (in 'Ajat Shatru' Act I Scene 9) is again very appropriate in describing the helpless state of her mind-

निर्दय उंगली! अरी ठहर जा,
पलभर अनुकम्पा से भर जा,
यह मूर्छित मूर्छना आह-सी
निकलेगी निस्सार। etc.etc.

As we have already remarked,[1] a strong tendency of cultural revival is perceptible in the plays of Prasad. He aimed at reviving the golden part in his plays, and for that purpose he has created that ancient Indian atmosphere in such a true and picturesque manner that the Indian life of the Mauryan, Gupta, Harsha's or other periods actually presents itself before our eyes and we feel as if actually moving amidst those people and living in those very conditions. Not only Prasad's setting of the scenes is in conformity with those times, even the names and titles of different characters, their feelings and habits, their conversation and their dresses— the entire paraphernalia[2] and atmosphere is in keeping with the time they represent, Moreover, in depicting the social, political and religious conditions of those times in his plays, Prasad has been very careful and realistic.[3]

1. See page 152 above. 2. Vinod Shankar Vyas: 'Prasad Aur Unka Sahitya' page 139-140.
3. Dr. Jagannath Prasad: 'Prasad Ke Natakon .... etc.' pages 285-291.

But that does not mean that modern age and contemporary life found no effect on Prasad's mind. Keen observer of contemporary life and conditions as Prasad was, we find that he has very cleverly reflected contemporary problems in a realistic portraiture of historical times. Firstly we find that the characters of Chandra Gupta, Skanda Gupta, Bandhu Varma, Sinharam, Alaka, Jay Mala etc. are glowing examples of patriotism; in their characters an appeal is indirectly made to the youth of the country to follow their ideals of patriotism and self-sacrifice. Again, in 'Chandra Gupta' the playwright has clearly raised his voice against provincialism and communalism —

चाणक्य — तुम मालव हो और यह मागध; यही तुम्हारे मान का अवसान है न? परन्तु आत्म-सम्मान इतने ही से सन्तुष्ट नहीं होगा। मालव और मागध को भूलकर जब तुम आर्यावर्त का नाम लोगे तभी यह मिलेगा। (Act I Scene 1)

Or again

सिंहरण — ..... परन्तु मेरा देश मालव ही नहीं गांधार भी है। यही क्या, सारा आर्यावर्त है।"

The following words of Sarama, in the first act, fourth scene of 'Nag Yajna' have an echo of Hindu-Muslim unity, and appeal for sinking all racial differences —

सरमा — सम्राज्ञी! मैं तो एक मनुष्य जाति देखती हूं — न दस्यु और न आर्य। न्याय की सर्वत्र पूजा चाहती हूँ — चाहे वह राजमंदिर में हो, या दरिद्र कुटीर में।

The question of divorce and remarriage as raised in 'Dhruva-Swamini' is also a re-echo of contemporary problem.

Similarly at various other places also we find a mature analysis of some of the contemporary religious, social, and political problems. But, with his masterly skill and genius Prasad has fitted contemporary problems so nicely and aptly in ancient historical atmosphere, that not only that they do not appear in-appropriate for those times; rather they may not sometimes strike to an ordinary mind at first reading.

Further, in Prasad's plays we find a beautiful combination of the classical and Western dramatic principles. According to classical rules a Natak should deal with a well-known plot (नाटकं ख्यातवृत्तं स्यात्) and in Prasad's plays we find that with the exception of 'Kamana' and 'Ek Ghunt' the plot of all other plays is historical and not imaginary. Again, the hero must be possessed of different qualities of the body

head, and heart and this we find in the leading characters of Prasad's plays (like Chandra Gupta, Skanda-Gupta, Harsha, Sinharan and others). Proper attention has been devoted to sentiment[1] also in accordance with classical practice although not so scruplously as in the latter. At the same time, conflict which is essentila for a successful play according to Western principles is also present in almost all the plays of Prasad. Again, under influence of modernism or Westernism, Prasad has violated the classical tabooes, and has shown the scenes of death, murder, battle, embracing etc. on the stage; (for instance the death of Ram Gupta, Shaka chief, Vijaya, Nand, Devaki etc. is shown on the stage; scenes of fighting are quite common; in Skanda Gupta, Dev Sena is shown embracing Skanda Gupta in Act III when she was being sacrificed by Prapanch Buddhi).

In dividing his plays into acts and scenes, Prasad has not followed one uniform principle. Some of his plays have only three acts each (e.g. 'Ajat Shatru'; 'Dhruva-Swamini') others have four (e.g. 'Chandra-Gupta' 'Rajya-Shri') and some of them have five acts each (e.g. 'Skanda Gupta'). Regarding the division of acts into scenes we find that in 'Ajat Shatru' the acts have been sub-divided into scenes and the scenes have been named 'Pahala Drishya' or 'Dusara Drishya' etc. In 'Rajya-Shri' and 'Chandra Gupta' acts have been subdivided into scenes, but scenes have been named as only 'one', 'two,'three' etc. and the word 'Drishya' has been dropped. In 'Skanda Gupta' we find still another change; the acts have been divided into various scens, but scenes have not been given any number; rather every scene has been given a separate name or heading after the main events or place or characters of that scene; e.g. 'उज्जयिनी में गुप्त-साम्राज्य का स्कन्धावार', or 'पथ में मातृगुप्त' or 'अनन्तदेवी का सुसज्जित प्रकोष्ठ'. etc.

In this way no uniformity of principle has been maintained in the division of acts into scenes.

According to classical canons, tragic ending of the plays is prohibited; and in the case of Prasad's plays also we find that none of his plays is a tragedy in the Western sense of the word. But although all his dramas have a happy-ending, yet the playwright's

1. Dr. Jagannath 'Prasad Ke Natakon ----" page 301-305.

conception of comedy is very peculiar. A shadow of grief and the tragic hovers over his plays from the beginning to the end. Prasad's comedy is a combination of peace (Shānti) and renunciation ('Vairagya)[1]; his mind was reflecting upon the Hindu philosophy which looks upon life as essentially full of happiness, and also on the Buddhistic philosophy, according to which life is full of woe and misery.[2] As a result of this combination of feelings, Prasad, although he has ended all his plays happily, has infused in a penetrating note of sorrow, grief and torment.

Defects in Prasad's Plays.

The plays of Prasad are full of numerous literary and artistic merits. But they are not altogether free from defects. First of all we have to see how far are these plays successful for stage-performance; but before we express our own opinion on this point, let us first see what the author has himself said on this point---

"मेरी रचनायें तुलसीदत्त शैदा या आगा हश्र की व्यापारिक रचनाओं के साथ नहीं नापी तौली जानी चाहिए। मैंने उन कंपनियों के लिये नाटक नहीं लिखे हैं, जो चार चलते अभिनेताओं को एकत्र कर, कुछ पैसा जुटाकर, चार पर्दे मंगनी मांग लेती हैं और दुअन्नी अठन्नी के टिकट पर इक्केवालों, खोंचेवालों और दुकानदारों को बटोरकर जगह-जगह प्रहसन करती फिरती हैं। 'उत्तररामचरित', 'शकुन्तला' और 'मुद्राराक्षस' नाटक कभी न ऐसे अभिनेताओं के द्वारा अभिनीत हो सकते और न जनसाधारण में रसोद्रेक का कारण बन सकते। उनकी काव्य-शैली कुछ विशेषता चाहती है। यदि परिष्कृत बुद्धि के अभिनेता हों, सुरुचि संपन्न सामाजिक हों और पर्याप्त द्रव्य काम में लाया जाय तो ये नाटक अभीष्ट प्रभाव उत्पन्न कर सकते हैं।" (3)

In other words, the playwright admits that in case his dramas are performed by ordinary actors before an ordinary mass-audience with the expenditure of little money on them, they will prove failures to a great extent. On the other hand, if the audience is a class-audience (and not a mass-audience) possessed of adequate aesthetic sense and power of critical appreciation, and the plays are staged by learned and cultured actors, then they can achieve ample success on the stage. In this we agree with Prasad to a great extent; the use of Sanskritised Hindi, of poetic or philosophic dialogue etc. which are defects for an ordinary audience will verily

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1. Dr. Nagendra 'Adhunik Hindi Natak', page 11-12
2. Ibid. (3) Dr. Jagannath Prasad: "Prasad ke Natakon etc". page 295

be changed into merits before a highly-educated, learned and refined audience. But in addition to these, there are a few more internal defects in Prasad's plays which won't change even if the audience and the actors are cultured and educated.

Of these defects the first is the very length of these plays; plays like 'Chandra Gupta' 'Ajat Shatru' and 'Skand Gupta' are too lengthy for one performance as they will take five to six hours each if properly performed without any abridgements. Secondly the plot of the three plays named above is very complicated; several plots run side by side,[1] which result in a great rush of events and characters; and it is therefore very difficult to grasp all the points and to understand all the events and characters in a stage-performance, where the audience won't get time to think over any action or speech of an actor, nor would any actor wait for the audience to let them properly understand the plot or any character.

Again, as Prasad had no practical knowledge of the stage, he has put such scenes together which cannot be arranged on the stage, one after the other, without great difficulty. For example, the first two scenes of 'Chandra Gupta' cannot be arranged without great inconvenience; the first scene is of the Gurukul of Takshshila, and as Taxila was a renowned University, this scene has to be made very grand and impressive. And the succeeding scene takes us to the pleasure garden of king Nand, which again has to be shown in a befitting manner. But there is no interval between these two scenes to enable the stage people to remove the setting of the first scene and to set the next scene with all its grandeur. If there could be a revolving stage (as we have in Western countries) where several scenes can be arranged simultaneously, then, by revolving the stage with the help of an electric switch, the first scene would be set aside and the second presented in its place without any loss of time.

Moreover, there are certain scenes like those of battle and warfare in these plays which cannot be successfully presented on the stage.

Further we find that the songs have been so frequently used in

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1. See page 155-6 above.

certain plays (e.g. 'Ajat Shatru', 'Chandra Gupta') that they begin to be boring and cheap, and lose their charm. For example in 'Chandra Gupta' act IV scene 4, Malavika sings thrice; her songs in this one scene, if properly sung with tune, will take twenty minutes, which means that this one scene (including its prose) will take nearly thirty minutes, and then how many hours will the whole play, which has more than 45 scenes, take to perform.

In 'Skanda Gupta' Dev-Sena sings so many times, and so does Magandhi in 'Ajat Shatru'; some of these songs are fairly long. In actual performance, this too much of singing, however emotional, will not look very appropriate.

Moreover, the number of scenes should go on decreasing in succeeding acts; but in 'Chandra Gupta' and 'Nag Yajna' the number of scenes in the closing acts is more than that in the previous acts.

Besides these minor defects, a more serious defect is found, at certain places, in the dialogues. While Prasad's dialogues are very appropriate in general,[1] on certain occasions they have become unnecessarily lengthy. Firstly, when the playwright wants to express his own views on a certain topic, he has introduced a discussion at such places and then has been swayed by his weakness of putting forth all his arguments and counter-arguments together at one place; instances of such unnecessarily lengthy dialogues are to be found in 'Skanda-Gupta' in Act IV in the discussion between Brahmans and Shramans; or in 'Ajt-Shatru' in Act III scene 4 in the conversation of Shaktimati and Dhirgh Karayan, or in the opening scene of 'Nag-Yajna' etc.

On other occasions we find that the cause of lengthy speeches is the emotional, poetic or philosophic nature of a particular charcter. In the excess of emotions, the character fails to put something in a simple and brief manner, but gives unnecessary length to the expression of his ideas; instances of such lengthy speeches can be found at several places, e.g. in 'Ajat-Shatru' Act II Scenes 1, 3 and 8, in 'Skanda-Gupta' in the talk of Matrigupta and Mudgal on poetry (Act I) in 'Chandra Gupta' in Act III, 6 etc. As these unnecessary speeches and discussions have little to do with the main story, they lead to looseness in plot-construction, since they don't take the plot further with them.

1. See page 163-4 above.

In 'Vishakh' Prasad has critcised the use of soliloquies in the words of Maha Pingal in the following manner— "जैसे नाटकों के पात्र स्वगत जो कहते हैं, वह दर्शक समाज वा रंगमंच सुन लेता है, पर पास का खड़ा हुआ दूसरा पात्र नहीं सुन सकता, उनको भरत बाबा की शपथ है" etc. (Act I scene 2).
This means that Prasad does not look at soliloquy or 'aside' as natural and realistic; but he has himself used soliloquies so often and sometimes so lengthy that their use has become a defect. While short soliloquies are very numerous, lengthy soliloquies too are not rare in Prasad's plays; for instance some of the lengthy soliloquies are those of Chanakya in 'Chandra Gupta' Act I Scene 4, in Act I scene 7, in Act III Scene 6; of Malavika in Act IV scene 4 where she sings a song also in soliloquy; in 'Ajat-Shatru' the soliloquy of Bimbasar in Act I Scene 2, of Padmavati in Act I Scene 9, where she sings a song also to herself, of Shyama in Act II Scene 4, the long soliloquy of Bajira in prison in Act III scene 2, where she also sings a song, of Viruddhaka in Act III scene 3 where he also sings a lengthy song, of Magandhi in Act III Scene 7 where she also sings; such instances can be found in other plays also. Soliloquies can be tolerated and even appreciated if they are appropriate to time and situation and are not very frequent and lengthy; but the case is not so in Prasad's plays as appears from the above references.

Another defect in Prasad's plays is the introduction of unnecessary and even useless scenes; when something can be told in सूच्य and can be conveyed merely as an information, full scenes have been given. On other occasions some such scenes have been introduced which are not fit for सूच्य even and can be deleted outright as they really express author's own views on certain topics. For instance in 'Chandra-Gupta' the 6th scene of Act II (मालवों के स्कन्धावार में युद्ध-परिषद्) could have been merely 'Suchya' and there was no necessity of introducing this superfluous scene. Again, scenes 3 and 7 of Act I of 'Chandra Gupta' have nothing to do with the plot although they throw some reflection on the character of Chanakya. Various scenes referred to just before while discussing unnecessarily lengthy dialogues can also be deleted outright without doing any harm to the plot of the play or can be made only 'Suchya'.

Another feature which has almost become a defect is that

Prasad has shown so many deaths, suicides and murders on the stage. In 'Chandra Gupta' for example, he shows the death of Kalyani, Parvateshwar, Nand and Ambhik etc. on the stage; in the same way in 'Skanda-Gupta' the death of Devaki, Bandhu Varma, Vijaya, Parna Datta etc. has been shown on the stage. Death or murder scenes are so frequent in Prasad's plays that in certain cases two deaths have been shown in one scene as we find in the first scene of the 4th act of 'Chandra Gupta' where the death of both Parvateshwar and Kalyani has been shown in one short scene. This does not look very aesthetic and artistic and may look repulsive to a cultured and refined audience for whom Prasad's plays are meant in his own words.[1]

Moreover Prasad's difficult language and his lack of humour will certainly minimise the dramatic charm and interest of his plays, whether the audience consists of ordinary or selected people.

In the end we can say that inspite of all these defects, Prasad's plays are the proud asset of Hindi literature. If they suffer from certain defects of stage- performance, the blame lies only partly on Prasad, and partly the absence of standard Hindi stage is responsible for them. Had there been a regular, standard Hindi stage present before Prasad, he, inspite of all his poetic and philoso-phic nature and his love of Sanskritised Hindi, would have been more careful to make his plays more suited to the stage

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1. See page 168 above.

[illegible] has shown in many details, subtleties and [illegible] in the stage. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Pandits, Ramba yanas, Vidyas, [illegible] [illegible] etc. have been [illegible] on the stage. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] have been shown [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] been [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible] his own [illegible].

[illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] selected people.

[illegible] [illegible], the [illegible]

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1. The [illegible] of [illegible].

CHAPTER XV.

FARCES AND SATIRES

Although farce is quite old in Sanskrit literature,[1] yet in Hindi drama the ball was set rolling by Bharatendu who wrote 'Vaidiki Himsa Himsa Na Bhavati' and 'Andher Nagari'.[2] After him several other writers wrote farces in which they satirised various social, political and religious evils; we have dealt with these farces in Chapter VI earlier. In the previous phase (1900-1912) we do not come across any farces worth the name, but in the period under discussion a large number of farces were written by various authors. And this abundance of farce looks very natural and reasonable too, when we cast a glance over the social, religious and political conditions of the country during these years. Satire will always flourish in a society which pretends to be over civilized simply because of its copying a foreign civilization, where the artificial life of the country has driven people emotionally and morally to depart from elemental conditions and primitive impulse, where social evils and vices are rampant, when political unrest prevails and where false conventions and institutions of old outdated ideas still hold the sway.

Accordingly we find that the usual targets of the satirists of this period are (as we shall find in the farces discussed in this Chapter) the miserly parents who either delay the marriage of their grown-up daughters being afraid of expenditure, or give them away to old husbands out of greed for money; widowers or elderly men in search of young brides, the lawyers and physicians with their strange methods of extracting money, young girls and boys with their zeal for new fashions, and occasionally, Rai Bahadurs, Honorary Magistrates, teachers, preachers and reformers have also suffered the lashing of their satire.

1. Kieth: Sanskrit Drama, page 260 ff. 2. See page 45-6 above.

Of the farcical playwrights of this period, G.P. Shrivastav has perhaps written the largest number of farces, including translations, adaptations and original writings. He started his career as a satirist with the Hindi translations and adaptations of Molire's farces. His ' Mar Mar Kar Hakim' is based on Moliere's 'Le Medecin Malgre Lui' which has also been adapted by another writer Lalli Prasad Pandey in his 'Thok Pit Kar Vaidyaraj'. It is a cheap farce in which a wood-cutter is beaten into a Hakim (physician), and foolish people call upon him for the treatment of their relations. In this short farce the author criticises those selfish fathers who try to give away their young daughters to old men in marriage out of greed for money. They set aside the youthful longings of their daughters, and seek the remedy of their mental and psychological ailment in foolish treatment of forced physicians.

'Ankhon men Dhul', which is an adaptation of Moliere's 'L' Amour Medecin' has a similar theme. Gobar Chand, the miserly father of Ketaki is delaying the marriage of his daughter as it means spending a considerable amount of money; further, he cannot tolerate that while he should take the pains of bringing up the girl, another man should take her away for enjoyment, as he says —

गोबरचन्द – .....अगर शादी करूं तो रुपये के रुपये दूं और लड़की से भी हाथ धोऊं। ......पाला-पोसा, बड़ा किया मैंने और जब वह किसी लायक हुई तो फ़ायदा उठाये कोई और। ऐसा गोबरचन्द मूर्ख नहीं। (Act I scene 5) ~~(I, 5).~~

He wants to throw dust in the eyes (and hence the title of the play) of society, of his daughter and her lover, but is himself befooled in such a way that the marriage is performed by his own self through the cleverness of the other party. In this farce again the author emphasizes the necessity of suitable and timely marriage in the following words of heroine's friend —

चंचल – अगर माली को इसका कुछ भी ख्याल होता, तो वह खुद ही आज इसका गुलदस्ता बनाकर किसी शौकीन के हाथ में दे देता; क्योंकि सुबह तक इसकी हालत और ही हो जायेगी। न यह यौवन होगा और न यह सूरत होगी। (Act I scene 3)

In 'Havai Doctor' which is based on Moliere's 'Le Medecin Volant', the author again revolts against the marriage of young girls

with old husbands. In this play Ghan Chakkar nicely plays the double role of a doctor and his discarded brother, at one and the same time. The scene where he befools the miserly Gobar Chand by his double role is very interesting and humorous. 'Sahib Bahadur or Chaddha Gul Kheru' is another interesting farce based on Moliere's 'Le Bourgoise Gentilhomme'. In this farce the character of fashionable but foolish Hajamat Beg is very amusing; from the beginning to the end the play is replete with very comical scenes.

In addition to his adaptations of Moliere's farces, G.P. Shrivastav has also written a number of original farces which are superior to his adaptations. In his 'Dumdar Admi' (1919) the author lashes his satire against the lawyers and ridicules their ways of life, their feigned pride etc. In the following words, the author delineates the picture of a lawyer — [निपोडशंख —एक बड़ी सी दुम लगाये हुए। जिसके आखिरी हिस्से में अंग्रेज़ी के मोटे २ अक्षरों में B.A.B.Sc., LL.B. दोनों तरफ़ लिखे हुए हैं, एक पैर में चूड़ीदार पैजामा दूसरे में ढीली मोहरी का पैजामा पहने, उल्टी अचकन पहने, एक बड़े डण्डे पर सवार, एक हाथ में जूता लिये डण्डे को पीटते हुए प्रवेश करते हैं।]

(Act I Scene 1)

'Gadbad Jhala' (1919) of Shri Vastav is extremely amusing; in the very opening soliloquy of बिगड़ेदिल the author sums up various contemporary evils that he wants to satirise —

बिगड़ेदिल — (आप ही आप) कुछ कहा नहीं जाता। जमाने की हवा ही बदल गई। मर्द जनाने हो गये। औरतें मरदानी हो गईं। लड़के सयाने हो गये। सयाने नादान बच्चे हो गये। जवानों में बुढ़ापा आ गया। बुढ़ापे में नये सिरे से जवानी समा गई। पचास बरस वाले तेरह बरस की कुमारियों की ताक में हैं। ..... खूबसूरत लड़कियां बूढ़ों से नहीं बचने पातीं। इनके लिये न टीपन का झगड़ा न ग्रह का बखेड़ा। चट मंगनी पट ब्याह। ..... मगर नौजवानों के लिये सौ २ मुसीबतें। पण्डितों का विचार, ग्रह का मिलान .....etc.etc.

In the following words the author emphatically denies the claim of old man on young girls —

बिगड़ेदिल — बला से। मगर सड़ी हुई लाश को खाने वाले गीदड़ों और कुत्तों को गुलाब का फूल नहीं मिल सकता। अगर भौंरा न मिले या बुलबुल न हो तो कुछ परवाह नहीं। फूल अपनी टहनी पर सूख के मुर्झा जायेगा।

The theme of the farce is the selfishness of an old man who, although his first wife is alive, wants to marry a beautiful young girl Malini and though of strictly orthodox views, he is ready to set aside

all consideration of horoscopes and conventions. Just as he wants to prey upon the young girl merely for the satisfaction of his mean old sensual thirst, in the same way his young son Kambakht Lal, who is already married, pines for the same girl for the satisfaction of his lust; he is an unscruplous epicure who always wants fresh bird after the first is spoiled by over-use —

कम्बख्तलाल – जिन्दगी मज़ा करने के लिये है न कि दुःख उठाने के लिये.... बगल में नालिनी होगी, मुंह में शराब की बोतल होगी और सामने रंडियां नाचती होंगी। औरत मर्द के लिये बनाई गई है। जहां एक से तबीयत घबड़ाई उसको चलता बताई और दूसरी घर में आई.....सलामती चाहिए अपनी जवानी की! कहीं औरतों की कमी है? औरतें तो जूतियां हैं। जब ज़रा पुरानी हुई चट बदल दी।

(Act I Scene 2)

At last Buddhu, their servant, comes to the rescue of girl's guardians. He enhances the effect of humour by acting at the same time the wife of both the son and the father. The old man who is conscious of his age shows his servility to the young wife and preaches her the lesson of पातिव्रतधर्म. In fact in the following words of the old man the author means to satirise the false and callous code of पातिव्रतधर्म for a wife, which means nothing less than a complete sacrifice of all her youthful desires and instincts —

मनहूस० – प्यारी, औरत के लिये उसका पति ही सबकुछ है। चाहे लंगड़ा हो, लूला हो, या ज़रा बूढ़ा भी हो। उसी की तनमन से सेवा करने से औरत बैकुण्ठ में जा सकती है। (Act I Scene 3)

The humour reaches the highest pitch when both father and son come face to face with each other in the presence of the young girl. Each of them claims the young girl to be his wife; at this very moment the real wedded wives of both the son and the father arrive on the scene and start beating their respective husbands, and then each other. In this confusion the father drags away his son's wife with him taking her as his own wife and the son carries away his mother taking her to be his own wife.

The author's humour, full of satire as it is, does not culminate here. When the girl (who is in fact their servant Buddhu in woman's guise) confesses to be the wife of both the father and the son at one and the same time, they take her to be mad and call for a

doctor for her treatment. As soon as the doctor looks at the 'girl', he develops a weakness for her. The author appears to satirise the low morals of men, who are always in search of hunting beautiful young girls by every means. In the end Buddhu appears in his real form, and the father, the son, and the doctor are all put to shame for their conduct.

Shrivastav has written several other interesting farces including 'Ulat Pher' (1918), 'Mardani Aurat' (1920), 'Kursi-Man', 'Na Ghar Ka Na Ghat Ka', 'Sahitya Ka Saput' etc. In the last named farce the author has made an attempt to satirise the conservative tendencies in language, humour and poetry from the modern standpoint.[1] In order to add charm and variety to the play, a love-theme has also been introduced. Sansari Lal, who represents the modern tendency in literature, loves the daughter of Sahitya Nand who stands for old pedants in literature. And in developing the love plot, the author has provided many comic and farcical situations.

In these farces of G.P. Shri Vashava we find that his humour is mostly cheap, inartistic and of a very low standard. In very few cases (e.g. in 'Gadbad Jhala') we come across humour of situation; otherwise the author has often tried to produce the comic effect from the very curious nomenclature of his characters (e.g. टर्रेखाँ, घबड़ाहट-मल्ल, बण्टाधार, मनहूसलाल, कमबख्तलाल, ठोकरचन्द, इस्मतबेग, सत्यानाशी etc.) The entire atmosphere of his farces lacks refinement and cultured taste. Moreover, while he is bold and blunt in his attacks, on several occasions he apperas more as a preacher than a farcist.

Better than those of Shrivastava are the farces of Badri Nath Bhatta. Of his farces 'Chungi Ki Ummed-Wari' (1914), 'Labad Dhondhon' (1926), 'Vivah-Vijnapan' (1927) and 'Miss American' (1929) are more popular. In 'Chungi Ki Ummedwari' Bhatta describes a municipal election, and relates in a humorous but realistic way how both the contesting parties adopt various methods of convassing, and how low they stoop (Act II Scene 1) for the sake of votes. Poor voters are so tired of the harassing convassing of the parties that some of them decide not to vote for any party (Act II Scene 2). Very humorous is again the situation when each party drags the voters for itself (Act II

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1. N. Madan: Modern Hindi Literature page 98.

deserve for her treatment. As more in the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], he develops a weakness for her. The author succeeds in [illegible] the incongruity of man, who are always [illegible] [illegible] beautiful young girls by every means. In [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], and the [illegible], the [illegible] and the [illegible] are [illegible] [illegible] their company.

Shrivastav has written several interesting farces including 'Ulat Pher' (1937), 'Mardani Aurat' (1938), [illegible], [illegible] etc. In the last named farce the author has made an attempt to satirise the [illegible] [illegible] in language, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the modern [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and variety to the plot, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], who represents the modern tendency in literature, [illegible] and [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] in literature, and in developing the plot, the author has provided many comic and farcical situations.

In these farces of G.P. Shrivastav we find that the humour is mostly cheap, [illegible] and of a very low standard. In very few cases, i.e. in 'Gadbad Jhala' we come across humour of situation; otherwise the author has often tried to provoke the most [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] entire arrangement of [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]

Scene 2) and then both the parties come to blows (Act III Scene 1).

The opening song (मंगलाचरण) of the Sutradhara, in which he pays his salutations to the 'Municipality' is also very humorous —

शुक्ल-श्यामांगशोभाढ्यां, गौन साड़ी विभूषिताम्
महामोह-लसद्भालां, करालां कालसोदराम्
चंदां चुंगीं विचिन्वन्तीं, खुली नाली निकालतीम्
डालतीं च नज़र अपनी, चारों आनि व रुआब से etc. etc.
तां श्री महाम्युनिसिपैलिटीति
ख्यातां सतीं भारत-भाग्य-देवीम्
सर्वे वयं नम्र-विनीत-शीर्षाः
पुनः पुनः पौरजनाः नमामः

In 'Vivah-Vijnapan' (1927) the author narrates the story of a widower who resorts to advertisement (विज्ञापन) for his second marriage He wants his new bride to a paragon of all virtues and beauties, and his wording of the advertisement and the manipulation of situations in the play provoke great fun and laughter. In the end the anxious widower succeeds in marrying the bride he liked, but when he meets her, he is horrified to find that the bride is an ugly elderly lady without teeth, nose and hair. All these were artificial and made-up; but then it was too late. In this play the writer has indirectly cast a slur on the Western ideal of artificial make-up, and the craving of second marriage in the heart of sufficiently grown-up men.

'Miss American' (1929) is another interesting farce of Bhatta in which he has attempted to ridcule the West and its civilization and character. The American characters represent Westernism in the play; they have no scruples about character or morality, and their only concern is money, as they say —

मिसेज़ अमेरिकन — ..... मेरी प्यारी दुलारी, न सही गोरा, कोई हिन्दुस्तानी ही सही। अपने यहां तो, यदि रुपया मिले तो सुअर से भी विवाह या मित्रता करने में संकोच नहीं किया जाता। (Act I Scene 2)
मिसेज़ अमेरिकन — ..... अरी मूर्ख, तुझे भैंसासुर देखना है या रुपया? प्यारी पुत्री, बस रुपया! रुपया! रुपया! जैसे बने वैसे रुपया! (Act I, Scene 2).

Their daughter may marry any person or do anything, provided its brings them money. They do not understand the spiritual culture of the East and are blinded by a veil of gross materialism. In Buhari Lal's character the author seems to satirise the tendency in the

Erotic school of poetry for the deep delight which its writers took in the unaesthetic and even vulgar expression of beauty; Buhari Lal emphasizes the necessity of vulgarity in Poetry several times —
बुहारीलाल — ..... इस बात में शायद आप भी मुझसे सहमत होंगी कि अश्लीलता ही कविता की जान है। संसार में लोकोत्तरानन्ददायिनी अगर कोई चीज़ है तो बस अश्लीलता, और वाक्य को नखतक रस में भर देने वाली अगर कोई चीज़ है तो बीभत्सता। (Act I Scene 5).

A notable feature of this farce is that the writer has considerably cut down the number of characters and has introduced only five male and three female characters of significance.

In addition to the farces of Shrivastava and Bhatta, Ugra's 'Ujabak' and 'Char Bechare' (1929) and Sudarshan's Honorary Magistrate are also interesting farces. In 'Char Bechare' the targets of Ugra's satire are four persons viz., the editor, the teacher, the reformer and the preacher. Perhaps the best of all these farces is 'Honorary Magistrate', in which Sudarshan has, in a very humorous manner described how the illiterate and foolish people, when made Honorary magistrates in lieu of their services to the government, behave. First of all we find them greatly afraid of the sight of a government peon; and when they accept the honour offered to them, they try to sell away justice and also indulge in wreaking personal vengeance and satisfying personal jealousies. This farce does not suffer from the defect of vulgarity or inartistic treatment and the humour is not forced or unnatural.

But in most of these farces various inartistic and cheap means have been adopted inorder to produce fun and excite laughter. First of all, most of the characters have been given very humorous and even ridiculous names (as also pointed out above in case of Shri Vastav's farces). Secondly, in certain cases, the diction of these plays is humorous; words and phrases are so selected and placed in such an order that their mere utterance excites laughter; e.g. in 'Dumdar Admi' Act I Scene 2 -

सर्वदानन्द — आप चाहे वकील हों या बैरिस्टर —
अलबेले — मादा हों या नर —
रंगीले — घोड़ा हो या खर —
गुलज़ार — आदमी हो या बन्दर —
घबराहट — हकीम हो या डाक्टर —
सर्वदानन्द — मुनसिफ़ हों या डिप्टी-कलेक्टर। etc.

A similar type of cheap humour is introduced in the following lines of 'Labad Dhondhon' —

हाकिम — तू अच्छी तरह नौकरी बजा सकेगा?
नौकर — क्या घंटा बजाने की नौकरी है? हज़ूर मेरा क्या जाता है आप कहेंगे तो दिन रात घण्टे बजाया करूंगा।
हाकिम — अबे बेवकूफ़!
नौकर — (आप ही आप) एक सरटीफिटक तो मिला।
हाकिम — घण्टा-वण्टा कुछ नहीं, तू सब काम संभाल लेगा?
नौकर — जी हां, क्यों नहीं। मैं क्या आदमी नहीं हूं? आदमी का काम आदमी नहीं संभालेगा तो क्या जानवर संभलेंगे। etc.

In several cases the authors have put different dialects in the mouths of different characters; by using different dialogues they have tried to make the dialogue amusing, and also by making a particular character pronounce certain words in a peculiar manner they have tried to excite laughter; e.g.

धौकलदास — जदी मेरे को पूछो ओ तो याई मेरी शमझ में नेई आवे रे, कि लल्लालुगई शुशरी तो गेहणोई शे खुश होय रे। हमनने अपनी जोरुआ को जाई तरेशे राजी राखे रे। वो रांड तो भोत बके झके रे। छे छे फ़ीट की चूतीशे बात करे रे। etc (Ankhon Men Dhul Act I Scene I)

In the same way in 'Mardani Aurat' the editor's speaking श in place of स excites laughter —

बण्टाधार — तभी तो शम्पादक बन गये। लेखक बनते तो लेख लिखना पड़ता, कवि बनते तो कविता करनी पड़ती, और शम्पादक बनने में मज़े शे बैठे धन लूटकर तोंद फुलानी पड़ती है, और यों मुफ़्त के शाहित्य के शपूत कहलाते हैं। जब शे शम्पादक बने हैं तब शे शाढ़े शत्रह इंच तोंद बढ़ गई है। चाहे नाप के देख लो। (Act I, Scene 5).

In 'Ujabak' the dialogue of the two poets Lanth and Santh is very humorous; e.g.

लंठ — मेरा कहना है ब्रजभाषा मोस्ट रद्दी है,
खारवां की गद्दी है,
नूतनता मौलिकता हीन है
दीन, अनबीन है।
और स्वच्छन्द मेरा राग घटबढ़ है —
छन्द जो रबड़ है।
ओल्ड ब्रजभाषा में कलंक है, सुलंक है
डर्टी पर्यंक है,
कामिनी है कुच है, कालिन्दी का किनारा है,
तेरहवीं सदी की गण्डकी की गन्दी धारा है। etc.

संठ —(लंठ को ललकारकर)
रुको ! रुको ! मत क्रोध दिलाओ,
झुको ! झुको ! मत बात बढ़ाओ।
अब मत राग बेसुरा गाओ।
ससुर बनो सुर को अपनाओ। etc.

In addition to these, boisterous humour is also produced on several occasions as a result of melodramatic scenes and funny situations. For instance, in 'Mardani Auat' the editor Bantadhar hides himself in a bag, which is auctioned out to Sukhiya for one hundred rupees. When on opening the bag, Bantadhar comes out and is presently given a good beating (Act III Scene 7), the audience cannot help their laughter. Similarly, in the second act, second scene of the same play, when a cowherd who is suffering from Nyctalopia (night-blindness) beats Petu Lal and Bantadhar taking them both to be his lost buffaloes, the scenes becomes boisterously funny :—

(एक अहीर का डण्डा लिये हुए आना)
अहीर — न जाने मोर दूनों भैसीयें कहां तुड़ाय के गयीं। अब कहां जायीं ढूंढें। रतौंधी होत है। भले सूझ नाहीं पड़त है। हो लेयो ! जानो सम्मने दूनों ठाढ़ हैं। भले मिलि गयीं। आओ भू-ऊ-रि! (डण्डा से पेटूलाल और बंटाधार की तोंद पर मारता है) अरे ! चल नहीं कोई कानीज हउज़ मां करियाये देयी। अरे भाग चला तक! तक! तक! (पीछे दुम पकड़ने के लिये हाथ बढ़ाता है) अरे ! पोंछिया कवन कसाई काट लेइगा। हो लियो। सिंघियो कहूं तोड़ाय आइस। हाय दादा ! (मारता है)
(पेटूलाल और बंटाधार घबरा कर भाग जाते हैं। पीछे अहीर मारता हुआ जाता है।)

In the same way (in Gadbad Jhala) the scene of Buddhu's playing the part of the beloved of both the father and the son, and at the same moment the appearance of their real wives on the spot is very humorous. Again in 'Mardani Aurat' (Act II Scene 2) the following situation is very funny —

(पेटूलाल गर्भानन्द बड़ी सी तोंद फुलाये एक तरफ़ से आता है। दूसरी तरफ़ से बण्टाधार आता है। दोनों की तोंदें लड़ जाती हैं।)
बण्टाधार — अरे बाप रे बाप तोंद फूट गई।
पेटूलाल — अररर ! मालगाड़ी लड़ गई।
बण्टाधार — कौन चूरनवाले? अरे यह कौन सा रोग हो गया तुम्हें। बदन भर में गर्भ ही गर्भ !

On the whole we can say that these farces are mostly devoid of the skill of plot-construction and power of characterisation; they abound in low uncultured humour, cheap entertainment, forced satire and melodramatic situations. With little literary worth or dramatic

finish, these farces, with their inconsistent and unnaturals characterisation, episodic plot and exaggerated portrayal of life, failed to be popular amongst the cultured people.[1] Beautiful situations of genuine humour are not lacking in the works of Sudarshan, Bhatta and Ugra, but these writers have written a very limited number of farces. But, although these farces have not much significance in the history of Hindi drama, yet they paved the way for the realistic drama of the next period. They prepared the audience, to some extent, for the Problem Plays, which would have otherwise surprised or even shocked the general audience.

B. Realistic Tendency (Problem Plays).

The farces and satires were dramas dealing with contemporary problems of society and religion in their own way; with the potent yet pleasant weapon of humour mixed with irony, they struck hard various social, religious and domestic evils. In addition to these farcical dramas, a number of serious plays were also written in this period on contemporary problems and evils. While the farces presented an exaggerated view of life in order to excite laughter, the serious plays (dealt with below) present a realistic picture of society, faithfully delineating different sides of the picture; occassionally, humour — of a refined and restrained nature — has also been introduced in these plays. In fact these plays stand as precursors to the problem plays of the next period and in them we behold the glimpses of the realistic tendency which shone forth in the succeeding period.

'Netronmilan' (1915) of Mishra brothers, 'Sangram' (1922) of Munshi Prem Chand, 'Ghulami Ka Nasha' (1924) of Lakshman Sinh, 'Madhur-Milan' (1923) of Jagannath Prasad Chaturvedi, 'Pap-Parinam' of Jamna Das Mehra and 'Samaj' (1930) of Ghananand are some of the notable plays of this period that can be put under this head.

'Sanyasi' (1931), 'Rakshas Ka Mandir' (1931) and 'Mukti Ka Rahasya' (1932) of Lakshmi Narayan Mishra are much advanced than the

1. Dr. Inder Nath Madan: Modern Hindi Literature; page 94-5.

plays named above, and although chronologically they fall in this period, yet they have much in common with the problem plays of the next period, and have therefore been discussed in the next period [1] along with other problem plays.

Of the remaining plays 'Netronmilan' gives an interesting description of the atmosphere and defects of the courts, and the evils of bringing cases there; it also describes the tricks and tacts of the lawyers for extorting money from both the parties; 'Ghulami Ka Nasha' is based on a political theme and deals with the slavery of the country. 'Pap-Parinam', which became very popular, is an adaptation of Girish Ghosh's famous play 'Grih-Lakshmi'; Kali Das, the hero of the play falls in bad company and begins to love Razia who is a market beauty. At her instance he murders his father and hands over all his belongings to the lady of his love; but in the end Razia proves faithless and Kali Das is kicked out of her house. Now the man comes to his senses, and with the efforts of his virtuous wife he turns into a noble man. His younger sister Kamala who is married to Madan, develops a weakness for Hari Kishore, a neighbour. To make the plot still more complicated, another man Hiranand catches a fancy for Kamala. Hari Kishore is at the point of murdering Madan, but the timely arrival of Kalidas with his servant and friend saves his life and Hari Kishore is arrested. The playwright has depicted the characters in natural and realistic colours and the play throws light on various social evils and warns the society against their consequences.

The stage of Prem Chand's 'Sangram' is set in village atmosphere and the characters are mostly poor farmers or wealthy Zamindars. It is a very lengthy drama, with five acts and 39 scenes (in the 3rd edition) and is not a very successful as a piece of dramatic art. In characterisation, the author has shown partiality to poorer characters (e.g. Hal Dhar, Rajeshwari) and has tried to depict them in glowing colours; on the other hand he has pulled down the wealthy Zamindars (e.g. Sabal Sinh, Kanchan Sinh) and has attributed them various vices and crimes.[3] The work does not testify to the author's ability as a good playwright

1. See Chapter XXI below.
2. Braj Ratna Das: Hindi Natya Sahitya; pages 165-166.
3. Ibid; and Dr. Som Nath Gupta: Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas, page 215

but it gives proof of the author's zeal to run down the capitalist class and raise the poor in the esteem of the audience.

'Samaj' of Ghananad launches a vigorous compaign against the evil of untouchability and the work has a reflection of the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. Without much artistic claims, the play is still quite a successful attempt at realistic drama. Vishuddhanand represents the radical class, while Dhandas stands for the conversative mass in society. In the opening scene, these opposite tendencies have been expressed in a trenchant dialogue; Vishuddhanand pleads that in God's eyes all are equal, while Dhandas holds that to break the social order as framed by divinity is a sin —

धनदास — .....अपने पूर्व-संचित पापों का दंड भोगने के लिये ईश्वर ने जिनको दलित जाति में जन्म दिया है, उनकी सहायता करना पाप नहीं तो क्या है? यह तो ईश्वरीय विधान में बाधा डालना है।.....

विशुद्धानन्द - नहीं महाशय, ईश्वर की दृष्टि में सब समान हैं। समानता ही ईश्वरीय नियम है। अछूतों को अछूत और पतितों को पतित बनानेवाले हम हैं, न कि ईश्वर। उस पतित-पावन को तो दीन दुःखी ही प्यारे हैं।...etc. etc.

(Act I scene 1)

Jnan (Gyan) Prakash, a youngman of radical views, has taken the vow of celibacy; but at the sight of an 'untouchable' girl Shanta who in fact belongs to a high caste he begins to love her. His orthodox father Haridas cannot tolerate this thing and consequently the son is banished from home. Very touching is the scene (Act II Scene 3) when Gyan Prakash, turned out of his father's home, seeks farewell of his simple-minded beloved who makes an open confession of her deep love for him. Again, there is great force in the following words of Gyan's mother, who although orthodox in views, is prepared to set aside all scruples about caste if that brings happiness to her son:-

लक्ष्मी — मैंने उस लड़की को कभी देखा नहीं है, पर मेरे बच्चे को अगर उससे सुख मिल सकता, तो मैं घर में क्या उसे सिर आंखों में रखती। तुम्हारी तरह मैं जाति को अपने सिर पर बांधकर नहीं फिरती। मेरी जाति तो मेरा पुत्र था। उसके बिना मुझे संसार की जातियां लेकर क्या करना?

(Act II Scene 4)

But the father is totally blinded by his conversative zeal, and in the end, having lost all due to his foolishness of faith, he is turned out of his own home. Then he realises that his son was on the right; he repents for his tyrannical treatment towards his son, loses his eyes in weeping and in the end the parents and the children accidentally meet, and Shanta (the 'untouchable' girl) is married to Gyan.

has it given proof of the author's [illegible] often the [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] the poet in the [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible] or [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] without [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] a successful attempt [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] in contrast. In the opening scene [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] all are [illegible], while [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] by [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] —

[illegible]

[illegible] (nyaya) [illegible], a [illegible] of [illegible] views, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible] of [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] in the following [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

To the main theme have been tagged some minor social problems of child-marriage, intercaste marriage, the institution of beggary etc; for instance, in the following words the playwright has cast a slur on early marriage —

पड़ोसिन — ......बारह वर्ष से बड़ी लड़की बिना ब्याहे रखना तो महापाप है। ऐसा करके कौन अपनी जाति खोयेगा, और पितरों को नरक में पहुंचावेगा? ......हमारी बिरादरी में बारह वर्ष से बड़ी बिन-ब्याही लड़की मिलनी असंभव है। (Act I Scene 2)

Although the characters of Shanta and Gyan Prakash have some individuality, yet most of the other characters are no more than types; Vishuddhanand is a typical social reformer who is wedded to his cause. Gyan Prakash belongs to the same class, but the human side of his character is shown by his response to the love of Shanta. Hari Das stands as a symbol of orthodox Hindu ideology. The author has portrayed the so-called 'Up-to-Date' club in worst possible colours, as all its members (e.g. Yar Ali, Act I Scene 6) are rogues, knaves and debauches.

The author has shown sufficient skill in plot-construction, but the ending of the play has been made melodramatic by the incidental union of all the principal characters, including those (e.g. लाडलीदास) who had been separated and lost long long ago. The playwright would have enhanced this melodramatic effect, had he brought the villains (Yar Ali and others) also on the stage and made them feel sorry for their conduct; however, this purpose is served by the respective news that has been brought about each one of them by Vishuddhanand.

CHAPTER XVI.

ALLEGORICAL DRAMA

The different types of drama of this period that we have discussed in the foregoing chapters were liked by different types of audience, largely varying in number.[1] But the allegorical drama with which we are concerned in this chapter came into existence not as a result of the liking or demand of any audience, but due to the longing of certain talented playwrights who sought to introduce this type of drama, (which existed in Sanskrit literature), in Hindi literature also. In Sanskrit we have a good number of allegorical dramas,[2] 'Prabodha Chandrodaya' being the most famous of them. In English literature Spenser's 'Fairie Queene' and 'Pilgrims' Progress' are two famous allegorical works. In Hindi various translations of 'Prabodha Chandrodaya' appeared in the eighteenth and ninteenth centuries;[3] the 'Dev-Maya-Prapanch Natak' of Dev was another allegorical drama written on the lines of that famous Sanskrit play.[4]

The only important allegorical drama of this period is Prasad's 'Kamana' (written 1923-24: printed 1927). The stage of this play is set in a floral island, which abounds in bliss and the people where-of have descended from the stars; they are innocent, unsophisticated and contented people, enamoured of their romantic but natural surroundings: e.g.

सन्तोष —........ ये हरे भरे खेत, छोटी छोटी पहाड़ियों से ढुलकते-मचलते हुए झरने, फूलों से लदे हुए वृक्षों की पंक्तियां, भोली गउओं और उनके प्यारे बच्चों के झुंड; इस बीहड़, पागल और कुछ न समझने वाले उन्मत्त समुद्र में कहां मिलेंगे। ऐसी धवल धूप, ऐसी तारों से जगमगाती रातें वहां होंगी? (Act I Scene 1)

The islanders are free from all worldly ambitions and conflicts. One day a foreign youth, Vilas, accidentally embarks on that island; he has plenty of gold with him, which attracts Kamana (humân desire), the Queen of that floral island. The foreigner is surprised to note

1. See page 117 above.
2. Keith: Sanskrit Drama; pages 251-6.
3. See page 22 above.
4. See page 23 above.

the strange qualities of these people —

विलास — आश्चर्य! कैसी प्रकृति से मिली हुई जाति है! महत्त्व और आकांक्षा का अभाव, और संघर्ष का लेश भी नहीं है। जैसे शैल-निवासिनी सरिता पथ के विषम ढोकों को, विघ्न-बाधाओं को भी अपने सम और सरल प्रवाह तथा तरल-गति से ढकती हुई बहती रहती है, उसी प्रकार यह जाति, जीवन की वक्र रेखाओं को सीधा करती हुई, अस्तित्व का उपभोग हंसती हुई कर लेती है। (Act I Scene 3).

All of a sudden Vilas gets fired with the ambition of ruling over that innocent tribe(Act-I Scene 3); his ambition appears before him in the form of a shadow and instructs him to introduce gold and wine in that island for his purpose —

छाया — मूर्ख! अपने देश की दरिद्रता से विताड़ित और अपने कुकर्मों से निर्वासित साहसी! तू राजा बना चाहता है? तो स्मरण रख, तुझे इस जाति को अपराधी बनाना होगा। जो जाति अपराध और पापों से पतित नहीं होती, वह विदेशी तो क्या, किसी अपने सजातीय शासक की भी आज्ञाओं का बोझ वहन नहीं करती। और, समझ ले कि बिना स्वर्ण और मदिरा का प्रचार किये तू इस पवित्र और भोली भाली जाति को पतित नहीं बना सकता! (Act I, Scene 3)

Gradually, the greed of gold and the intoxicant effect of wine lead to mutual jealousies and hostilities, and crime gets rampant in that island. Kamana, the Queen, who was drawn towards Vilas for his wealth and wine, is now horrified at the sudden rush of crimes—

रानी — ठहरो। मुझे पागल न बनाओ। अपराधों की आंधी! चारों ओर कुकर्म! ओह!

(Act III, Scene 8).

For a moment she is at her wit's end to know the cause of all this change, but soon she, with Vivek and others, realises her mistake and they decide to boycott foreign goods and to resort to their own simple methods of life. In the end Kamana marries Santosh and the foreigner is driven out of the island with all his gold.

In this play, the author strikes a strong note of contrast between the Materialism of the West and sublime spiritualism of the East, and the ultimate success of the latter. The simple theme of the drama is to emphasize the divine joy of natural, innocent, care-free life on one hand, and the woes and miseries that usually follow a libertine life of materialistic ends. The closing scene nicely draws the contrast between materialism that tosses in the turmoil of an angry oceasn, and spiritualism that blooms with bliss and glory:—

(परिवर्तित दृश्य! समुद्र में नौका पर विलास और लालसा। सब नागरिक उस पर स्वर्ण

the strange qualities of these people —

[illegible]

(Act I, scene 9).

All of a sudden [illegible] that the emulation of acting [illegible] over their innocent [illegible] has been [illegible] them in the form of a shadow [illegible] to the [illegible] gold and who is thus jealous for their [illegible] —

[illegible]

(Act I, scene 3)

Accordingly, the greed of gold and the intoxicant effect of [illegible] leads to mutual jealousies and conflicts, and [illegible] that island. Romance, the [illegible] who was [illegible] wealth and [illegible], is now horrified at the [illegible] —

[illegible]

(Act III, scene 6).

Such a scene [illegible] to show the [illegible] first [illegible] and [illegible]

[illegible]

फेंकते हैं। नाव डगमगाती है, लालसा का क्रन्दन — 'सोने से नाव डूबी, अब नहीं बस'। तुमुल तरंग। परिवर्तित दृश्य में अंधकार। दूसरी ओर आलोक। फूलों की वर्षा।)

In the following words of Vivek, the playwright sharply critcises the so-called modern 'civilization' which, he feels, is much worse than their past culture:—

विवेक —.......लोहू के प्यासे भेड़ियो, तुम जब बर्बर थे, तब क्या इससे बुरे थे? उससे पहले इससे भी क्या विशेष असभ्य थे? आज शासन-सभा का आयोजन करके सभ्य कहलाने वाले पशुओ, कल का तुम्हारा धुंधला अतीत इससे उज्ज्वल था। (Act II, Scene 8)

Kamana, the heroine of the play is the queen of man's mental world; she is his fickle, ever-changing desire. By making her drawn towards Vilas in the beginning, but married in the end to Santosh, the author has tried to point out that the only satisfaction of human desire (Kamana), pine however it may for epicureanism (Vilas), really lies in contentment (Santosh). By coupling Vilas and Lalasa together in the end, the playwright means that it is only man's momentary greed (Lalasa) that can be satisfied with Vilas, and not his genuine desire (Kamana). Kamana's bowing before Vilas drags her into a series of trials and tribulations, but in the end she realizes her real self and abandons his company; the moment her two friends — Vilas and Lalasa— are driven out of the floral island, there is again all peace and happiness there. This means that with the banishing of Vilas and Lalasa from man's nature, there will be all happiness for him. In the same way other characters like Vivek, Lila and Vinod etc. have their significance in the play.

Like other plays of Prasad 'Kamana' too has a happy ending; but like them, this too has a penetrating note of sorrow. In giving happy ending to this play, Prasad has not only carried out the classical canons,[1] but he has also been true to his convictions and creed; moreover by giving a tragic ending to this play the playwright would have meant the victory of materialism and the defeat and destruction of spiritualism, the overthrow of Indian ideals and the glorification of the West. And this was entirely contrary to Prasad's aim and purpose. He means to uphold Indian culture and spiritualism, and a strong tendency of revivalism is noticeable in all his plays[2]. Not only had a

1. See page 145 & 152 above. 2. See page 145 & 152 above.

tragic ending spoiled the play, it would have certainly injured Prasad's[1] feelings too. In this respect we entirely disagree with Dr. Nagendra, when the latter says that the happy-ending of the play is not a natural but a forced ending, and that a tragic ending would have proved much better.

The plot of the play has been well-constructed and the characters, although they are symbols, are not mere abstractions. Some of them (e.g. Kamana, Vilas, etc.) have sufficient flesh on them and appear to be concrete persons than mere abstract qualities. The characters of Kamana and Vilas have been well drawn, and both of them appear to be human beings, possessed of their respective ambitions and failings. The character of Vivek is very powerful, while that of Lalasa is fickle and infirm. The playwright has not been very successful in drawing a clear and bold line of demarcation between Kamana and Lalasa, and in this respect Kamana's character is under-developed and not clearly differentiated from that of Lalasa.

The atmosphere of the play is romantic, and it abounds in romantic scenes of the floral island. The play has three acts, sub-divided into scenes; none of the scenes begin with lengthy stage directions, which feature we find in Prasad's last play 'Dhruva-Swamini'.

There is adequate force and flow in dialogue, which is less poetical and much less philosophical than the conversation of Prasad's historical plays. Moreover, although the play deals with the theme of conflict between various human feeling and emotions, — all abstract qualities — yet it has a sustained interest and is not boring.[2] The speeches are shorter and the language is comparatively simpler. Songs have been occasionally interspersed and some of them have the warmth and throbbing of youthful emotions; e.g.

कामना — . . . .

बरस चुकीं रस-बूंद सरस हो,
फिर भी यह मन कुम्हलाया।
उमड़ पड़े आंखों के झरने,
हृदय न शीतल हो पाया। etc. (Act I Scene 5)

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1. Adhunik Hindi Natak, page 86.
2. Dr. Nagendra: Adhunik Hindi Natak; page 87.

Translations

Having finished with the original plays of different kinds, we come to the translations. In this period a large number of plays were translated from Sanskrit, Bengali and English. Pt. Satya Narayan translated Bhavabhuti's 'Uttara-rama-Charita' (1913) and 'Malati-Madhava' (1918). L. Sita Ram translated Shudraka's 'Mricchakatika' (1913) and Vijayanand Tripathi translated Kalidasa's 'Malavikagnimitram'.

In 1912 T. Ganapati Shastri[1] published for the first time thirteen plays of Bhasa, the great dramatist whose works were not available before. His plays attracted the attention of several Hindi scholars; Maithili Sharan Gupta translated his 'Svapna-Vasava-dattam' (1929); two translations of 'Madhyam Vyayog' appeared from Lucknow and Ranchi in 1925 and 1928 respectively. Translation of 'Pratima-Nataka' and 'Pancha-Ratra' were published at Lahore by Uttar Chand Kapur and Sons. All the plays of Bhasa are marked by simplicity of language and style, and a comparative study of these translations with the original plays shows that the translators have been quite successful in their attempt.

In 1931 appeared Dr. Hardatta's translation of Dinnaga's 'Kunda-Mala'; and in 1935 appeared Har Dyalu Sinh's translation of Harsha's 'Naga-nand'; both these translations have been rendered with care and success.

Much more important than these Hindi translation of Sanskrit plays are the Hindi translations of several Bengali dramas. The pioneer Bengali playwright who made a strong appeal to Hindi translators was D.L. Roy, and about a dozen of his plays including 'Rana Pratap', 'Mewar -Patan', 'Durga Das', 'Nur Jahan', 'Shah Jahan' 'Tara Bai', 'Sita' 'Bhishma' and 'Chandra-Gupta' were translated into Hindi during this period. Roy selected the ancient Hindi period and the Mughal period of Indian history to represent the spirit of their respective ages, by creating ideal characters who could inspire the audience with new life.[2]

As Dr. R.K. Yajnik[3] has shown, D.L. Roy was deeply influenced by

1. Keith: Sanskrit Drama page 91.
2. Guha Thakurta: The Bengali Drama, page 159.
3. The Indian Theatre pages 224-229.

Translations

Having finished with the original plays of different kinds, we come to the translations. In this period a large number of plays were translated from Sanskrit, Bengali and English. [illegible] translated [illegible]'s 'Uttara-Rama-Charita' ([illegible]) and '[illegible]' ([illegible]). [illegible] translated [illegible]'s '[illegible]' ([illegible]) and [illegible] translated [illegible]'s '[illegible]'.

In [illegible] for the first time thirteen plays of Bhasa, the great dramatist, whose works were not available before. His plays attracted the attention of several [illegible] [illegible] translated his '[illegible]' ([illegible]) [illegible] [illegible] in [illegible] and [illegible] respectively. [illegible] of '[illegible]' and '[illegible]' were published [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] and a comparative study of their [illegible] [illegible] plays [illegible] the translators have been [illegible] successful in their attempts.

In [illegible] [illegible]'s translation of [illegible]'s '[illegible]'; and in [illegible] appeared [illegible]'s translation of [illegible]'; both [illegible] translated [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible]

Shakespeare, and like Shakespeare we find great internal conflict and emotion present in Roy's dramas also, besides external conflict which is abundant there.[1] At the same time Roy was influenced by contemporary national movement, and in his plays we find a strong feeling of patriotism, cultural revival, as also of Hindu-Muslim unity. Roy's dramas happened to be so great and artistic that they exercised great influence on several Hindi playwrights. Prasad was perhaps the only important playwright of this period who declined to receive any influence from Roy and to to tread his own path; otherwise even Sudashan (in his 'Anjana'), Ugra (in his 'Mahatma Isa') have been greatly influenced by Roy's art.[2]

Babu Ram Chandra Varma and Shri Rup Narayan Pandey, who have translated these plays of D.L. Roy in Hindi have achieved great success in their work, and their translations have the life, force and interest of the original. If the fact of their being translations be not disclosed to a reader, he will take these translations to be original compositions. It is good that the task of translating these plays of a great dramatist was undertaken by great and skilful translators; otherwise, if some lesser man had undertaken this task, he might not have been able to do justice to a genius like D.L. Roy. In the following we quote an extract from Rup Narayan Panday's translation of 'Bhishma' —

अर्जुन — क्या कभी ऐसा युद्ध देखा है? वह देखो, भीष्म के धनुष से छूटे हुए बाणों ने प्रलय के बादल के समान सूर्य के किरणजाल को ढंक लिया है। वह देखो तलवार की पिंगल चमक बिजली-सी खेल रही है। अकेले भीष्म सौ भीष्म के समान युद्ध करते हुए शत्रुओं के हृदय में वज्रसदृश बाण मार रहे हैं। चारों ओर से हजारों योद्धा आकर घेरते हैं— और पल भर में भीष्म के बाणों से छिन्न भिन्न होकर पृथ्वीतल पर गिर पड़ते हैं। etc. etc. (Act V Scene 5).

In addition to the plays of D.L. Roy, Rup Narayan Pandey translated 'Krishna Kumari' (1919) of Michael Madhusudan Datt; the following extract will show that the translator has been quite successful in retaining the emotions and force of the original —

बलेन्द्र — ......(आंसू पोंछकर) बेटी! मैं निठुर चांडाल हूं! मैं बिना अपराध के तेरे प्राण लेने आया हूं। आहा — बेटी बिल्कुल बेखटके निद्रा देवी की शान्तिमयी गोद में विश्राम कर रही है। मुखभाव को देखने से जान पड़ता है, यह बड़े सुख से मनोहर स्वप्न देख रही है। लेकिन यह नहीं जानती कि पास ही कालरूप धारण किये पापी चाचा प्राण लेने के लिये खड़ा है। etc.

(Act V, Scene 3)

1. Dr. I.N. Madan Modern Hindi Literature page 101.
2. Dr. Som Nath Gupta Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas, page 225.

Pandey's 'Padmini' is again an adaptation[1] of a Bengali drama written by Kshirod Prasad; he also adapted D.L. Roy's farce, 'त्र्यहस्पर्श', into his 'Murkh-Mandali' (1918). A number of plays of Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, including his 'Dak Ghar' (1920), 'Visarjan' (1924), 'Mukt-Dhara' (1925) 'Raja-Rani' (1925), 'Chir Kumar Sabha' (1928), 'Chitrangada' (1928) and 'Achalayatan' etc. were also translated into Hindi, but unlike Roy's plays these translations of Tagore's plays could not exercise any influence on Hindi dramatists. They only famaliarised those persons with Tagore's art and style who could not enjoy his plays due to their ignorance of Bengali.

Ram Chandra Varma's translations of Girish Ghosh's 'Praphull' and 'Vaidhavya Kathor Dand Hai Ya Shanti' are also quite successful.

Besides Sanskrit and Bengali plays, a good number of plays were translated into Hindi from foreign languages also. Rai Bahadur Lala Sita Ram translated about a dozen plays of Shakespeare including 'As You Like It', 'Othello', 'Julius Caesar', 'Cymbeline', 'King Richard II', 'Tempest', 'King Lear', 'Hamlet, Prince of Denmark', 'Comedy of Errors', 'Measure for Measure', 'Much Ado About Nothing' etc.[2] The translator has not achieved due success in translating the verse-portion of the original; often, therefore, he has rendered the original verse into prose. The translation of the prose portion is quite satisfactory, though not very beautiful, as can be seen from the following extract.—

आर्यनन्दन — क्यों, अनन्त! कैसे हो? क्या हिम्मत हार गये! धीरज धरो। मन को ढाढस बंधाओ, इस बीहड़ में कोई शिकार मिल गया तो अभी लाता हूं — तुम बड़े समझदार हो। मेरे कहने से मौत को थोड़ी देर रोके रहो..... आओ मैं तुमको आड़ की जगह में ले चलूं — भगवान ने इस वन में कुछ भी दिया तो तुम भूखे न मरने पाओगे — अनन्त! धीरज न छोड़ना।

(As You Like It; Act II Scene 6)

While in most of the cases the translator has retained the original names of characters and places etc. in his translations, in certain cases, he has changed them to appropriate Indian ones; for instance in 'As You Like It' we find that Frederick, Amiens, Jaques, Orlando, Adam Rosalind, Celia etc. have been changed to पुण्डरीक, अमीचन्द, जयकृष्ण, आर्यनन्दन, अनन्त, रसलीना, सुशीला etc. respectively.

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1. See Introduction to the play.
2. All these translations have been published by Ram Narain Lal, Publisher, Katra Road, Allahabad.

Three plays of Galsworthy, viz. 'Strike', 'Justice' and 'Silver Box' were also translated into Hindi, the first two by Munshi Prem Chand under the title 'Hartal' (1930) and 'Nyay' (1931) and the last one by Lalit Prasad Shukla under the title 'Chandi Ki Dibiya' (1931); these translations were published by the Hindustani Academy, Allahabad. Two translations of Tolstoy's plays also appeared from Ajmer under the title 'Andhere men Ujala' (1928) and 'Zinda Lash' (1929). Further, Morris Materlinck's short plays 'Sister Beatrice' and 'The Useless Deliverance' were adapted into 'Prayashchit' and 'Unmukti Ka Bandhan' by B. Padum Lal Punna Lal Bakshi.[1] Various adaptations of Moliere's farces have been dealt with earlier.

1. See page 174ff above.

CHAPTER XVII

HINDI DRAMA IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (Contd.)

THE MODERN PERIOD (1932-1948).

Various Tendencies.

A study of the foregoing chapters reveals that the period (1912-1931) which succeeded the sterile period of Hindi Drama (1900-1912) was quite exuberant, and beside the great personality of Jay Shankar Prasad, playwrights like Milind, Sudarshan, G.V. Pant, Ugra and Badri Nath Bhatta etc. also made their valuable contributions. But this rich phase of Hindi drama was succeeded by a still more rich and prosperous phase (1932-1948), and during this modern period Hindi drama made good progress in different branches. Moreover, as we shall show later,[1] classical influence minimised during this period, while Western technique and ideas began to dominate; Western playwrights began to be studied with greater interest, and Ibsen and Shaw became the heroes of the realistic playwrights of Hindi.

Looking at the situation of different types of Hindi drama during this period we find that the popular medieval performances like the Ras-Lila, Ram Lila etc. which were very popular in the ninteenth century and held their ground even in the first quarter of the twentieth century, now ceased to please the masses. 'Nautankis' totally passed into oblivion; Ras-lila was strictly restricted to the land of its birth, and Ram-Lila lost much of its life and charm, although it still survived in certain parts of the country, including East Punjab, Delhi and United Provinces.

The Parsi theatrical dramas which had been very popular so far, now suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the 'movies' and the

1. See Chapter XXVI below.

'talkies'. The talkies which provided greater entertainment to the audience and were often superior to the theatrical plays in dramatic skill, left little audience for the latter. In every big town one or more cinema-halls were established and even the smaller towns were occasionally visited by touring talkies; consequently the people of cities as well as towns were weaned away from theatrical performances.

The great popularity of the screen influenced the literary drama of Hindi also; the literary Hindi drama of this period began to bear reflections of the cinema, and screen tactics began to appear in literary plays as we shall show in the following chapters. Besides, the aim and object of the successful playwrights (e.g. Sudarshan, G.V. Pant, B.N. Bhatta etc.) had so far been to write their dramas for the stage and to see that they were appropriate for stage-performance. But now some of the playwrights keep the screen in view while writing their plays, and they include several scenes and situations which cannot be successfully represented on the stage, but which are quite appropriate for the screen; Chandra Gupta Vidyalankar has himself admitted this fact in the preface to his 'Ashok'[1] and Seth Govind Das in his 'Karna'[2].

The mythological drama which attracted a large section of the audience in the previous phase[3], now considerably lost its ground. In the previous period the audience was spell-bound with mythological themes and mythological names[4]. But now the situation changed; with the fast-increasing influence of Western education and culture, the people diminished their blind faith in mythology, and instead of revelling in remote mythological themes they began to look around and to take interest in the present. Consequently, the mythological drama became less popular in this period, and we find that the number of such plays is much less than that of historical plays or the realistic problem plays.

On the other hand historical drama that was less popular in the previous period[5] greatly flourished during the modern period; and

1. See page 199 below. 2. See page 227-228 below. 3. See page 118 above
4. Ibid. 5. See page 118 above. 4/124

'Kalidas'. The tradition which prevailed about the [illegible] audience and was often regarded as the theatrical plays [illegible] exist, left little audience for any better. In every big town [illegible] or more of these half more established and even the smaller towns [illegible] occasionally visited by touring talkies to [illegible] the people of cities as well as towns were weaned away from [illegible] [illegible]

The great popularity of the screen influenced the literary drama of Hindi also the literary Hindi drama of this period began [illegible] reflections of the cinema, and certain [illegible] began to [illegible] literary plays as we shall show in the following chapters. Besides, the old and outlook of the [illegible] playwright (e.g. [illegible], G.M. Pant, R.K. Bhatia etc.) had so far been to write their dramas for the stage and to see that they were appropriate for stage-performance. But now some of the playwrights kept the screen in view while writing their plays, and even included several scenes and situations which cannot be successfully represented on the stage, but which are quite appropriate for the present Indian Urban [illegible]. [illegible] has himself admitted this fact in the preface to his [illegible] and Seth Govind Das in his '[illegible]'.

The mythological drama which attracted a large portion of the audience in the previous phase, was considerably left [illegible] the previous period the audience [illegible] [illegible] themes and mythological names. But now [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] people [illegible] their [illegible] [illegible] revelling in remote mythological [illegible] and to take interest in the present. [illegible] drama became less popular [illegible] [illegible] number of [illegible] plays [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] this particular phase.

On the other hand, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

1. [illegible] 2. [illegible]
3. [illegible] 4. [illegible]

numerous playwrights including Chandra Gupta Vidyalankar, Seth Govind Das, Hari Krishna Premi, Uday Shankar Bhatta etc. contributed to this branch. Further, the historical plays of this period can be easily divided into two different sections: first, we find such historical plays as have been motived by a tendency of ancient cultural revival. These plays are a contination of Prasad's historical plays, in which the gifted authors have tried to revive and glorify the ancient culture of India. Vidyalankar's 'Ashok' and 'Rewa' U.S. Bhatta's 'Muktipath', Govind Das's 'Harsha' and 'Sashi Gupta' Lakshmi Narayan Mishra 'Garud-Dhwaj' etc. belong to this category. To the second category belong those plays, the themes whereof have been selected from medieval Indian history; the problems of Hindu-Muslim unity, the heroism of the Rajputs and other Kshatriyas, and a feudal atmosphere of jealousy, pride, mutual hostility, plots and conspiracies are the main features of these historical plays. U.S. Bhatta's 'Dahar', Premi's 'Raksha Bandhan', 'Shiva Sadhana', 'Ahuti', Svapna-Bhang', 'Mitra', Satyendra's 'Mukti Yajná, Ashka's 'Jay Parajay' etc. belong to this category. Historical drama became so popular during this period that even playwrights like Lakshmi Narayan Mishra and Seth Govind Das, who were devoted to the cause of problem plays, could not resist the charm of writing historical dramas.

Besides these types, another type of drama developed in Hindi during this period. In the preceding phase we found[1] that a realistic tendency was steadily pervading Hindi drama, but such realistic plays were few in number and were not very advanced in art and merit. But the conditions had considerably changed by the modern times; the play-wrights as well as the audience had been deeply influenced by Western education, literature and culture. People had been reading Western literature for several decades and now some of the learned men of India began to visit Western countries for higher education in Art. Science and Law. In this way through literature or personal contact several Hindi scholars came under Western influence; they studied contemporary dramatists of the West like Ibsen, Shaw and O'Neill etc. and tried to introduce Western elements in Hindi drama. These play-wrights (like Lakshmi Narayan Mishra, Seth Govind Das, Bhuvaneshwar

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1. See page 182ff above.

etc.) were responsible for a strong realistic tendency which produced a good number of problem plays during this period.

These problem plays can again be divided into two different classes: firstly, those plays that deal with the problems of the individual, mostly with the problem of sex; and secondly, those plays that deal with social, political or socio-political problems. Plays like 'Mukti Ka Rahasya', 'Rakshas Ka Mandir' 'Sindur Ki Holi' 'Sanyasi' etc. of Lakshmi Narayan Mishra, 'Aparadhi', 'Duvidha', 'Sadh' of Prithvi Nath Sharma belong to the first class, while Seth Govind Das's 'Seva Path', 'Santosh Kahan', 'Pakistan', 'Mahatva Kise' 'Tyag Ya Grahan' etc. belong to the second category. While the problem plays of Lakshmi Narayan Mishra and Prithvi Nath Sharma deal mostly with the problems of marriage and sex, Seth Govind Das, in his problem plays, mainly dwells on Gandhian principles of service and sacrifice and their contrast with socialism and communism. The problem plays are very popular type of drama in the present age, although the illiterate masses may find some of the problems discussed in these plays (especially in those of the first category) beyond their grasp or concern.[1]

The allegorical drama which we witnessed in Prasad's 'Kamana' in the last phase continued in this period as well. It is meant only for a learned audience that can fully understand and appreciate this type, in which abstract qualities are personified into different characters. 'Jyotsna' of Sumitra Nandan Pant, 'Nav Ras' of Seth Govind Das, 'Chhalana' of Bhagavati Prasad Vajpeyi are some of the successful attempts at allegorical drama in this period.

In addition to the above, two more types of drama developed in this period. The first is the 'Lyrical Drama', a type of drama which is written all in verse, mostly blank verse. It possesses all the essential elements of drama like the entrances and the exists, plot-construction, characterisation, dialogue etc. The theme often centres round a woman,[2] and the atmosphere of the play is marked with sentiment and emotion. Although in Hindi dramas of the ninteenth century

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1. See page 234 below. 2. See Chapter XXII below.

verse is quite abundant, still those plays are essentially different from these lyrical dramas as they are not exclusively in verse and are not so full of sentiment as the latter type. In Hindi drama this type has been borrowed from the West, and a good number of lyrical plays are available in English literature.[1] Seth Govind Das's 'Sneh Ya Swarg' Uday Shankar Bhatta's 'Matsyagandha', 'Vishvamitra', 'Radha' '[illegible]' etc. are some of the important lyrical dramas.

The second type of drama which has again been borrowed from the West is the One Act Play. It is true that some of the types of Sanskrit Rupaka (e.g. Bhana, Vyayoga, Prahasana etc.) were one-act-plays. Again, some of the plays of Bharatendu also (e.g. 'Bharat-Janani', 'Vishasy Visham' Aushadhan, 'Nil Devi') had one act each. But the Hindi one-act-play which flourished in this period has not descended from these types and its structure and technique have been borrowed from one-act-plays of the West, as we shall show later.[2] Dr. Ram Kumar Varma, Upendra Nath Ashk, Seth Govind Das, Bhagavati Charan Varma, Uday Shankar Bhatta, Bhuvaneshwar and a few more playwrights have written a number of one-act-plays.

Having referred to all these types, one thing remains to be said that this is only the broad classification of Hindi drama of this period. There are a few more dramas, like 'Kartavya' and 'Vikas' of Seth Govind Das, 'Bhagya-Chakra' of Sudarshan, 'Chhata Beta' of Upendra Nath Ashk, which do not come under any one of these heads, and claim an independent class. As they refuse to accept the above classification, they have been discussed in a separate chapter.[3]

In the following pages we shall take up these types oneby one. In discussing each class we have taken into account only leading or representative plays of each class, and have, only in brief, referred to the chief characteristics of each class of drama.

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1. Dr. Nagendra : 'Adhunik Hindi Natak', page 103.
2. See Chapter XXV below.
3. See Chapter XXIV below.

CHAPTER XVIII

HISTORICAL DRAMA (A)

The themes of the historical dramas of this class have been culled from the ancient Hindu period of Indian history, and like Prasad's historical plays these plays have also been written with a tendency of cultural revival. Some of the important plays of this category are 'Ashok' and 'Rewa' of Chandra Gupta Vidyalankar, 'Harsha' and 'Shashi Gupta' of Seth Govind Das, 'Ashok' and 'Garud-Dhwaj' of Lakshmi Narayan Mishra, 'Muktipath' of Uday Shankar Bhatta, 'Punya-Parva' of Siyaram Sharan Gupta and 'Antah Pur Ka Chhidra' of G.V.Pant.

'Ashok' (1935) is the maiden attempt of Vidyalankar at drama. The author has written this play for the screen as he has himself said in the introduction —

"अशोक के संबंध में, यदि ज़रूरत हुई, तो कैफ़ियत फिर कभी दूंगा। यहां मैं सिर्फ़ एक ही निवेदन करना चाहता हूं। पहले नाटक प्रायः रंगमंच पर खेलने के लिये लिखे जाया करते थे। परन्तु अब रंगमंच का स्थान चलचित्रों ने ले लिया है। इस नाटक में मैंने अनेक दृश्य ऐसे रक्खे हैं, जिन्हें रंगमंच पर तो आसानी से नहीं खेला जा सकता, परन्तु उनका चित्र बनाने में कोई कठिनाई न होगी।"

The play deals with the early life of the Mauryan Emperor Ashok, his usurption of the throne of Magadha, the murder of his elder brother Suman, and Ashok's conversion of heart after the great sacrifice of Shila, Suman's betrothed wife. The playwright has achieved good success in plot-construction, characterisation, and in creating tragic atmosphere and tense situations at several places. He has carefully delineated the characters of Suman, Shila, Ashok, Chandagiri, Upagupta, and to some extent of Tishya and Chitra. The characters of Suman and Ashok present a sharp contrast; the former is very affectionate, simple and sacrificing, while the latter is stern, ambitious, clever and callous. Shila is a befitting counterpart of

Suman; her spirit of sacrifice reaches its climax when she decides (Act V Scene 3) to sacrifice her own life in order to save Ashok, the cause of her husband's murder. Chandgiri, though a heartless brute and a wreckless tyrant, is still not entirely destitute of virtues; he is strictly loyal to Ashok, his master, and all his ignoble deeds are the result only of his deep devotion to his master.[1] Upagupta is imbued with the true spirit of Buddha, and it is the result of his pacific preachings that Shila gives up her firm resolve of vengeance[2] and takes to the path of love and service.

The playwright has shown adequate skill in dialogue; his dialogues, which are seldom lengthy,[3] are brisk and full of life and interest. He has made use of soliloquies on a few occasions, especially in the speeches of Suman and Shila;[4] but these soliloquies do not appear undramatic, and they help in understanding the nature and character of the speaker, which would have remained obscure otherwise.

The playwright has used one uniform language throughout the play, and it is simple Hindi, occasionally stuffed with hard Tatsama words. The use of Urdu and Persian words, however rare cannot be justified;[5] it is inappropriate and anachronistic to put Urdu-Persian words in the mouths of characters belonging to the Mauryan period.

The author has taken pains to make his scenes impressive and his situations forceful (e.g. Act II Scene 2, scene 5, Act III, Scene 3; Scene 6, Act V Scene 3 and Scene 4) he has taken special care to see that none of the scenes gets too lengthy or boring; in several cases (e.g. Act III Scenes 3; Scene 6, Act I Scene 6 etc.) he has introduced scenes within scenes. In addition to deep pathos (which we find in Act II Scene 5, Act III Scene 6; Act V Scene 3, Scene 4 etc)

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1. Vide Ashok's opening soliloquy in Act V Scene 1.
2. Act IV Scene 1 and Scene 2.
3. E.g. Chandagiri's speech in Act II Scene 6, Suman's soliloquy in Act III Scene I. Suman's long soliloquy in Act III Scene 6 etc.
4. Act I Scene5; Act I Scene 7; Act III Scene 1, Scene 3, Scene 6 etc
5. e.g. राजकुमार– कुछ बोलोगे भी, या बेवक़ूफ़ों की तरह ताकते ही रहोगे। क्या है, शेर?
मन्त्री — (सिर हिलाकर) नहीं।
राजकुमार – तो और कौनसी ख़तरे की बात है? etc. (Act I scene 5)

Or, in Act III, scene 7, first line; तुम्हें कर याद जगदीश्वर! हुआ जग हर्ष-दीवाना। etc.

the author has introduced light humour on a few occasions; there is a touch of humour (in the opening scene of the drama) in the conversation of the three princes; the conversation between Shila and her father (in Act I Scene 3 and Scene 7) is also lively with humour.

'Rewa' (1938) of Vidyalankar is a maturer work.[1] Its plot is not strictly historical, although it is based on historical characters and events to some extent.[2] Like his 'Ashok', 'Rewa' is also meant for the screen and not for the stage as the playwright has said in the introduction:-

"यह नाटक रंगमंच के लिये नहीं लिखा गया। हां, चित्रपट पर यह नाटक बखूबी उतारा जा सकता है।"

Like his other play, 'Rewa' also has five acts, which have like-wise been sub-divided into scenes. While stage directions are very brief in 'Ashok', here they have become very lengthy, and by means of these lengthy stage-directions, the author has tried to present vivid pictures of places, things and persons. The very opening scene of the play is very vivid and picturesque —

(समुद्र में तूफ़ान आया हुआ है। हवा तेज़ी से चल रही है। शिवमन्दिर जिस सामुद्रिक पहाड़ी पर स्थित है, समुद्र की बड़ी बड़ी लहरें उस पहाड़ी की नग्न चट्टानों पर ज़ोर ज़ोर से टकरा रही हैं और उनसे भयंकर कोलाहल उत्पन्न हो रहा है etc. etc.)

Some of the scenes, especially the opening and the closing scenes of this play are very significant and dramatic. While 'Ashok' is a comedy with a deep note of pathos, Rewa is a tragedy altogether.

Although Vidyalankar has proved true to his claim of becoming a successful playwright (as expressed by him in the introduction to 'Ashok'), yet he has not been as successful, at least in 'Ashok', in presenting the realistic atmosphere of that time as Prasad has been in his historical plays; in this respect his occasional use of Urdu words is also inappropriate and anachromistic as we have remarked above. Again some of the scenes can be easily eliminated without causing much harm to the main plot (e.g. 'Ashok' Act IV Scene 2, Scene 4, Scene 5, Scene 6, Act II Scene 7;); the death of Krishna-Varma in 'Rewa' does not properly fit in with the plot.

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1. Dr. Nagendra: Adhunik Hindi Natak page 25;
2. See introduction to the play.

Seth Govind Das is a well-known Hindi playwright, who has written various kinds of dramas, e.g. historical dramas ('Harsha', 'Shashigupta' 'Kulinata' etc.) mythological dramas ('Karna' etc), problem plays (Sewa-Path', 'Tyag Ya Grahan' etc.) lyrical dramas ('Sneh Ya Swarg' etc.) allegorical dramas ('Nav Ras'). He has been to jail several times in connection with the Congress movement, and most of his plays were written in the seclusion of the jail. His 'Harsha' (1942) which was written in Nagpur Jail, deals with the life of Harsha and its plot begins after the death of Rajya Vardhan. The plot is well-constructed and like Prasad the playwright has succeeded in infusing a spirit of reality in his description of those times; but this play is free from the hardness of language and rigidity of atmosphere which make Prasad's plsys difficult for the stage.[1] The characters of Madhava Gupta and Adityasena have been skilfully depicted, and they are possessed of individuality. But the characters of Hieun Tsang, Jaya Mala and Alaka appear no more than symols of various virtues; their presence in the play serves only to add to the softness and sublimity of atmosphere. Perhaps under the influence of Western drama, this play ends in in-decision as it closes with the following —

(.....उसी समय कुछ दूरी पर मंडप में अग्नि लगती है। हल्ला होता है। कुछ लोग भागते हैं।)
हर्ष –(माधवगुप्त से) हैं! यह क्या, माधव, यह भी क्या कुचक्रियों का कोई कुचक्र है ?
माधव० –(जल्दी से) जान तो यही पड़ता है, परम भट्टारक, परन्तु चिन्ता नहीं, उसके बुझाने का मैं अभी प्रबन्ध करता हूं। इस अग्नि के संग ही आर्यावर्त के साम्राज्य के प्रति विद्रोहियों की अग्नि भी सदा के लिये शान्त हो जायेगी।)

Seth's 'Shashi Gupta' (1942) is also a very interesting and artistic historical drama. In a very lengthy introduction by Dr. Harish Chandra Seth (which has been attached to the play) the learned scholar tries to prove that Chandra Gupta Maurya was no other than Shashi Gupta, the ambitious and enterprising young leader of the Ashwak tribe; he further holds that,

(१) चन्द्रगुप्त मौर्य नन्दवंशीय नहीं था और न मगध ही उसका मूल जन्म-स्थान था। नन्द-मुरा की कहानी तो अठारहवीं शताब्दी में गढ़ी गई है। वास्तव में वह पश्चिमोत्तर भारत का निवासी था। उसका जन्मस्थान सिंधु और कुमार नदियों के मध्य कोहमोर नाम का प्रदेश था जिसके कारण ही संभवत: उसके वंश का नाम मौर्य पड़ा। चन्द्रगुप्त और शशिगुप्त एक ही व्यक्ति थे। शशिगुप्त उसका जन्म-नाम था और संभवत: भारत के सम्राट का पद ग्रहण करने पर उसने चन्द्रगुप्त नाम धारण किया।

1. Braj Ratna Das: Hindi Natya Sahitya, page 192.

(२) चाणक्य अथवा विष्णुगुप्त कौटिल्य भी पश्चिमोत्तर भारत में विख्यात तक्षशिला देश का निवासी था। शुरु से ही चन्द्रगुप्त और चाणक्य में घनिष्ठ संबंध था। etc.

(३) ग्रीक इतिहासकारों का पोरस और मुद्राराक्षस का पर्वतक एक ही व्यक्ति थे। and so on.

Moreover, Dr. Seth has tried to prove that in the battle between Alexander and Porus, it was Porus who came out victorious and it was Alexander who applied to him for peace. On these and other findings of Dr. Seth, Seth Govind Das has based the plot of this drama. The play opens in romantic natural surroundings, and the author has presented a vivid picture of the scene in a lengthy stage-direction. Although Prasad's 'Chandra Gupta' deals with the same theme, yet the plot of 'Shashi Gupta' is much less complicated than that of Prasad's play, and here, inspite of the rush of events, the reader does not lose the link and is not lost in the maize of events and characters. .

Seth has been sagacious in giving importance to only a few characters, and due to this reason he has shown great skill in his characterisation of Shahsi Gupta, Chanakya, Alexander, Porus and Helen.

His Shashi Gupta is much different from the Chandra Gupta of other playwrights and historians; he has due emotion and fire; at the same time he is very considerate and deeply reflective (Act I Scene 5) and all his actions are motivated by a strong spirit of patriotism. Chanakya is possessed of a very keen power of observation; he is sure that Shashi Gupta is the only suitable and competent man to hold together a centralized government of the country. In a word he sums up the character of Shahsi Gupta as follows —

चाणक्य – वत्स, इस समय आर्यावर्त में तुमसे अधिक वीर, तुमसे अधिक साहसी, तुमसे अधिक आदर्शवादी, तुमसे अधिक देशभक्त, तुमसे अधिक शुद्ध अन्तःकरण और आचरण वाला और कोई व्यक्ति नहीं। etc.

(Act I Scene I)

At the same time Chanakya is fully aware of his own talents and power of king-making; he turns Shashi Gupta into an ideal man and king simply for the welfare of his motherland, and when Shahsi Gupta is once (Act IV Scene 3) reluctant to carry out his commands, he angrily tells him that he (Chanakya) has got the power of creating numberless Shashi Guptas:—

शशिगुप्त – (भर्राये हुए स्वर में) परन्तु, आर्य ..... परन्तु आर्य, जिस साम्राज्य में राज्य को ही सारा महत्त्व है, जिसमें साध्य ही सब कुछ है, साधन कुछ नहीं, ऐसे साम्राज्य का संचालक हो मैं नित्यप्राति इसी प्रकार के कार्य, इसी प्रकार के साधनों का उपयोग नहीं कर सकता। आज

पर्यन्त आपकी कोई आज्ञा न टालने पर भी आपकी इस आज्ञा का मुझसे पालन न हो सकेगा।
चाणक्य — (विकट हंसी हंसकर) ऐसा! तो अर्जुन के सदृश तुम्हें भी मोह हो रहा है। (कुछ रुककर) अच्छी बात है, सोच लो, भली भांति विचार लो। (खड़े होते हुए क्रोध से) चाणक्य अगणित शशिगुप्तों के निर्माण की क्षमता रखता है।

(Act IV Scene 5)

The last sentence of Chanakya discloses his height of self-confidence bordering on self-conceit. But all his deeds and conspiracies, noble or otherwise are meant for the good of his motherland (Act IV Scene 5) and not for his ownself; after finishing his task, i.e. after placing Shashi Gupta on the firm and foeless throne of India, he retires into forest (Act V Scene 5) without having any attachment to power, glory and luxury. This act greatly magnifies his qualities of self-abnegation and sacrifice, which we find strongly reflected in the person of Mahatma Gandhi.

In this drama of intrique, war and bloodshed the presence of Helen introduces a touch of softness by means of her delicate emotions + songs (Act II Scene 5; Act III Scene 2 Act IV Scene 2), her smypathy and compassion. She is innocent like a child (Act III, Scene 2) lovely like a rose (Act I Scene 2) brave and patriotic like a soldier (Act III, Scene I), and compassionate like a mother (Act III Scene 5). A true judge of virtues and merits that she is, she has a deep-rooted hatred for Ambhik, who is a traitor to his country; she falls in love with Shahsi Gupta simply because he is brave and patriotic (Act I Scene 4); but when he surrenders himself to Alexander (though as a matter of policy), She begins to hate him (Act III Scene 1); ~~but~~ again when he raises the banner of revolt against Alexander (i.e. stands up again for the freedom of his country) her feelings of love for Shashi Gupta return to her bosom (Act II Scene 5).

Alexander is a clever diplomat, familiar with all the devices of winning over his foes to his side (Act II Scene 5). Porus on the other hand, is given to sensual pleasures and is at the same time prompted by selfish ends (Act II Scene 5, Act IV Scene 5).

With the choice of appropriate words and epithets, with the use of pure Hindi without a single word of Persian and Urdu, and with befitting paraphernalia, Seth has succeeded in creating a realistic

atmosphere in this play. We find ourselves moving amidst Mauryan people and as if talking to them; this illusion is very spontaneous and in creating the atmosphere of Mauryan times, Seth has succeeded at least as much as Prasad. The dialogue of this drama is mostly forceful and quick and has not become heavy or tedious with philosophical or poetical discussions as we find in Prasad. Another important feature of this play is that a lot of action has been conducted through stage-directions[1], and at several places the author has made the stage-directions as important and useful as dialogue; even the scene of falling in love of Helen and ~~Chandra~~ Shashi Gupta (Act I Scene 3) has been conducted through stage- direction without a single word by way of conversation. The play has five acts, each divided into five scenes, sometimes very short (Act II Scene 3, Act IV Scene 4, Act V Scene 3 and Scene 4) and the play can be a good success on the screen.

'Muktipath' (1944) of Uday Shankar Bhatta is another historical drama of considerable merit. It has three acts; the first act is comparatively longer than the second act, which is a little longer than the third. The play discloses some influence of the screen in its number and decreasing length of acts, in the scene of Siddharth's departure from his palace (Act II Scene 4), in Siddharath's Samadhi (Act III Scene 2) etc. In the introduction the author sums up the central note of his play in the following words —

"अन्धानुकरण मत करो। सोचो और प्रयोग करो, इसी में जीवन की सार्थकता है।"

The play deals with the well-known story of prince Siddharath, his reflective nature, his disgust of the world, his renunciation, enlightenment and preaching of the path of salvation (मुक्तिपथ). The author has well-portrayed the character of Siddharth, who is innocent, compassionate (Act I Scene I, Scene 2) simple-minded and very reflective in nature (Act I Scene 2). All that he looks at, that he listens to, he takes to his heart and is set a-thinking (Act I Scene I, Act II Scene I); but the playwright has nicely emphasized the realistic side of Siddharatha's character by making him full of youthful feelings and worldly emotions also, as we find from his actions and behaviour in Act I Scene 4 and Scene 5.

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1. E.g. Act I Scene 3; the last stage-direction in Act III Scene 5; Act V Scene 3; Act II Scene 3.

The author has depicted Shuddhodan as a loving father, who would set aside his law and justice for the affection of his son (Act I Scene 2, Scene 3). The playwright has purposely introduced Sukeshi, who gives the author several opportunities of introducing sweet songs;[1] moreover she also helps in the characterisation of Siddharth and Gopa which would have otherwise remained either under-developed or the author would have been forced to introduce so many soliloquies for throwing adequate light on their character. The author has also produced ~~several~~ some lovely and romantic scenes of Nature, which can be presented only on the screen (e g. in Act III Scene 2). The dialogues are often very forceful, lively and significant, and the author seems to have taken special care to avoid the use of soliloquy as far as possible; it is only on two or three occasions[2] that the characters indulge in soliloquising, and there too it was essential to do so. Bhatta has also succeeded in producing a realistic atmosphere of Buddha's times; for instance, the court scene (Act II Scene 2) throws great light on the simple, truthful nature of the subjects of those days; instead of one side being the accuser and other the accused, here we find both the sides pleading themselves guilty and each side is anxious for punishment. Siddharth's noble mind is greatly moved by the inhuman justice of the judge, who inflicts severe punishment on these simple-minded and virtuous people and these words automatically escape his lips —

सिद्धार्थ — न्याय बड़ा कठोर है। उसके आंखें नहीं, हृदय नहीं है। वह यन्त्र है।

(Act II Scene 2)

Pt. Lakshmi Narayan Mishra, the well-known writer of problem plays, has also written two historical plays; while his 'Ashok' (1927) belongs to the previous period, his 'Garud-Dhwaj' (1948) is his recent enterprise in the field of historical drama. In the introduction to this play it is boasted that the author is the best playwright of the modern period. It is with great regret that we have to challenge the validity of this claim. The author has no doubt succeeded in writing good problem plays,[3] but in 'Garud-Dhwaj' he has proved a failure; the

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1. E.g. in Act I Scene 2; Act II Scene 4. 2. E.g. in Act II Scene 4, Scene 5, Scene 6.

3. See Chapter XXI below.

play is very boring and the plot is not only unfamiliar but also very loosely knit together. With the exception of one or two characters (like Kalidasa) all the dramatis personae are unknown to general readers, and the author has not thrown much light on them in the preface or even in the body of the drama. Dialogues are dull and monotonous, forceless and destitute of all warmth and life. The entire atmosphere is boring and has little variety of events and situations. In the whole of this drama, only the last scene of court-trial is interesting and it discloses the high ideal of morality of the people of those days. The play has three lengthy acts, and deals with the events of the first century before Christ.

Sudarshan's 'Sikandar' (1947), deals mainly with the historical events of Alexander's battle with Porus, and his forceful yet unsuccessful appeal to his Greek soldiers to give up their demand of going back home. In fact this play was first written some ten years earlier[1] for the screen, and directed by Sohrab Modi of the Minerva Movie Tone this play, when presented on the screen, proved a great success. Later on Sudarshan made some changes in it and got it published in a book form.

The 'Punya-Parva' (1933) of Siyaram Sharan Gupta is another historical drama of some artistic merit. The Boddhisattva and Brahmadatta respectively represent the noble and ignoble qualities and their characters bear a sharp contrast to each other. The writer has achieved good success in producing the atmosphere of ancient times, but he has made the language very hard for that purpose. 'Antah Pur Ka Chhidra' (1940) of Govind Vallabh Pant deals with the story of king Udayan and his two wives Padmavati and Magandhi. Although it is a historical drama, still it deals less with historical facts and more with the conflict that goes on between two different emotions in the mind of Padmavati (and to some extent of Magandhi). Padmavati is drawn towards the sublime beauty of Amitabh, and although outwardly her attraction is nothing but devotion, but at the bottom of her heart it takes the form of passion of one sex for the other. As the author has depicted the mental conflict of the the two queens and its effect on Udayan's mind, the atmosphere of this play is very emotional.

1. Introduction.

In this way we find that Chandra Gupta Vidyalankar, Seth Govind Das and Uday Shankar Bhatta are the leading playwrights of this branch and they have greatly succeeded in carrying on the tradition of Prasad's historical plays. Like Prasad's plays a spirit of cultural revival pervades most of these plays, and the authors have mostly succeeded in giving a realistic depiction of ancient Indian times. As in Prasad's plays, so here also we find that a conflict is present in all these plays; the **conflict** may be between two persons or ideologies and emotions. In 'Ashok' a struggle goes on between the spirit of service and sacrifice on the one hand and the spirit of ambition and aggression on the other. Suman and Shila are embodiments of the former spirit, while Ashok and Chandagiri symbolise the latter. In 'Muktipath' the perpetual struggle goes on between Siddharth who represents the spirit of renunciation, and his father and other relatives who try to bind him to the world. Similarly other plays have one conflict or the other working at their bottom.

The plot of most of these plays is quite complicated, but in no case do we find it so much confused and complex as in Prasad's plays. While Prasad has introduced several plots running side by side in one & the same[1] play, the playwrights of this period have seldom introduced more than one plot in one single play. Like Prasad's plays, the characterisation of these plays tends to be idealistic, and we find that some of the leading characters of these plays (like Suman, Shila, Rewa, Harsha, Chanakya, Shashigupta, Siddharth etc.) are possessed of extraordinary qualities and instincts. The language of these plays is generally simpler than that of Prasad's plays and in conversation too we do not stagger due to unnecessary philosophical or poetical discussions and discourses. As the leading playwrights of this branch have tried to purge their plays of these defects (which we find present in Prasad's plays) their plays are less difficult for the stage than those of Prasad. Some of the playwrights (e.g. Vidyalankar, Bhatta) have kept the screen in view while writing their plays and have included several scenes which can be aptly presented only on the screen. Another feature of most of these plays is their use of long stage-directions for drawing vivid pictures of places and persons.

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1. See page 155-6 above.

CHAPTER XXIX

HISTORICAL DRAMA (B)

In this chapter we shall deal with those historical plays, which have their themes selected from different periods of medieval Indian history. While the historical playwrights of the last chapter sought the remedy of the deplorable condition of their country in their glorious past when Hindu culture and civilization were at their zenith, the playwrights of this chapter have tried to recollect some picked events of the Muslim, Rajput and Marhatta history. At the same time, while dealing with historical events and facts, these playwrights have cleverly reflected various contemporary feelings like those of patriotism and revolt against slavery, communalism and Hindu-Muslim unity etc. in their plays.

Leading plays of this category are Harikrishna Premi's 'Raksha-Bandhan','Ahuti', 'Shiva-Sadhana', 'Swapn-Bhang', 'Mitra', 'Pratishodh' and 'Vish-Pan'; Uday Shankar Bhatta's 'Dahar', Govind Vallabh Pant's 'Raj-Mukut', Seth Govind Das's 'Kulinata', Upendra Nath Ashk's 'Jay Parajay' and Satyendra's 'Mukti-Yajna'. In 'Raksha-Bandhan' (1934), Karmavati, the widow of Rana Sangram Sinh sends Rakhi to Hamayun in her hour of distress;[1] and Hamayun accepts to help her like a real brother.[2] He has to pay heavily for his pious brotherly feelings, because Sher Khan takes undue advantage of his absence from the capital and brings Bengal and Bihar under his control.[3] Although, due to various impediments Hamayun could reach late, after the Jauhar ceremony of Karma Vati and other Rajput ladies, still he tried his best to help his 'sister', laying aside all consideration of Hindu and Muslim. On several occasions the playwright has resounded the

1. Act I Scene 6; 2. Act II Scene 2 3. Act III Scene 2.

note of Hindu Muslim unity in course of Hamayun's speeches —

हुमांयु — दुश्मन! ह: ह: ह:! दुश्मन! आंखों से तअस्सुब का चश्मा हटाकर देखो। जिन्हें हम दुश्मन कहते हैं, वे सब हमारे भाई हैं। हम एक ही खुदा के बेटे हैं। etc. etc. ~~etc.etc.~~

(Act II Scene 2).

In the following words again we find as if the author is preaching Hindu-Muslim unity —

चांदखां — आप सच कहते हैं, राणाजी! हिन्दु और मुसलमान दोनों ही हिंदुस्तानी है और रहेंगे। दोनों को एक होकर रहना पड़ेगा। etc.

~~etc.~~ (Act I Scene 3).

The following words again have a re-echo of Mahatma Gandhi's words—

आज खुदा खुद है हैरान।
पिला रहा है तुम्हें तअस्सुब की शराब शैतान।
कहां लिखा है, हमें बताओ, खोलो वेद-कुरान,
जो न तुम्हारा मज़हब माने ले लो उसकी जान।
मंदिर मसजिद काबा काशी सब में उसकी शान,
एक दीन सारी दुनिया का, 'नेकी कर इन्सान'।

(Act III Scene 2)

In addition to the main problem of Hindu-Muslim unity, the Gandhian ideas on untouchability are found in the following speech—

ज्वाहरबाई — चुप रहो, लड़के। मैंने सब सुना है। पश्चात्ताप की आग से मेरा हृदय जल रहा है। जिन्हें तुमने अभी नीच कहा है, वे वसुन्धरा के लिये भगवान के आशीर्वाद हैं — वरदान हैं। भीलराज का अपमान करके तुमने मेवाड़ पर देवताओं के अभिशाप को आमन्त्रित किया है। etc. (Act I Scene I)

The theme of 'Ahuti' (1940) is glowing with the ideal sacrifices of Rana Hammir and Mir Mahima Shah for each other. The author has delineated both of them in ideal colours. Mir Mahima, the commander of Alauddin's forces ia a brave but pious Muslim; he respects the ladies of the enemy as his sisters,[1] and disobeys his sensuous master who asked him to forcibly bring a Rajput girl to him.[2] In this way virtuous Mahima invites his downfall; he is banished by Alauddin,[3] but Rana Hammir gives him shelter. Annoyed at this Allauddin attacks Ranthambhaur (capital of Hammir); in the battle that follows the Rana sacrifices his all, even his sons, for the sake of his Muslim guest. And a true Muslim that Mir Mahima is, he does not hesitate in killing his loving real brother in battle,[4] as the latter came to fight against Rana's forces. Very touching is the scene (Act III Scene I) where Mir Mahima meets his brother immediately before the battle; really pathetic again is the scene (Act III Scene

1. Act I Scene 1. 2. Ibid. 3. Act I Scene 2. 4. Act III Scene 2.

4) when the Rajput women, looking at the approaching Muslim banner (which was in fact raised by their victorious Rajput heroes), decide to perform 'Jauhar' ceremony. In this play also Premi pleads for Hindu-Muslim unity by showing the sacrifices of Rana Hammir, a Hindu for Mir Mahima, a Muslim and vice versa.

In 'Shiva-Sadhana' (1937) again the author is harping upon the same tune. In the introduction he writes —

"शिवाजी के चरित्र को इतिहासकारों ने जिस रूप में अंकित किया है, उससे हिन्दुओं और मुसलमानों के हृदय दूर ही होते हैं। इसके विपरीत मैं ने इस नाटक में बताया है कि शिवाजी न केवल महाराष्ट्र में बल्कि सम्पूर्ण भारतवर्ष में 'जनता का स्वराज्य' स्थापित करना चाहते थे, उनके हृदय में मुसलमानों के प्रति कोई द्वेष न था। मेरी इस धारणा की इतिहास भी पुष्टि करता है।" etc. etc.

The play embraces a lengthy plot, and briefly refers to almost all the chief events of Shiva Ji's life. It has a very longlist of characters, but only a few of them, e.g. the characters of Shivaji, Aurangzeb, Jijabai, Roshan Ara and Jahan Ara have been largely delineated. The moral side of Shiva Ji's character shines forth when a beautiful Muslim girl is presented to him as booty, but Shiva Ji respects her like a mother and says —

शिवाजी — डरो मत, मां! डरो मत। शिवाजी विलासी कुत्ता नहीं है। तुम्हें देखकर मेरे हृदय में केवल यह भाव उठ रहा है कि यदि तुम मेरी मां होतीं तो क्या विधाता ने मुझे सौन्दर्य की दौलत देने में इतनी कंजूसी की होती? .... यह सौन्दर्य तो पूजने की वस्तु है, मां! (Act I Scene 4)

In this drama of intrigue and enterprise, war and bloodshed, the author has introduced the deliqate sentiments of love and sympathy through the character of Zeb-un-Nisa (daughter of Aurangzeb)[1], who falls in love with Shiva Ji for his heroism and pious virtues.

In addition to Hindu Muslim unity, the playwright wants to inspire his audience and readers with the sentiments of patriotism and fight for independence; in the closing speech of Guru Ramdas, the author appeals to the youngmen of India to sacrifice all their personal interest for the good of the country —

रामदास — भैय्या, यह स्वराज्य-साधना का कार्य, युग युग की गुलामी की बेड़ियों को काटने का काम, एक दो दिन में नहीं होता। यह कांटों और बाधाओं से भरा हुआ पथ है। इस पथ पर चलने की दीक्षा लेने वाले को मां-बाप, भाई बहन, लोक परलोक सभी से आंखें फेरनी होंगी। स्वतन्त्रता से अमूल्य वस्तु कोई नहीं — धर्म भी नहीं। etc. etc. (Act V Scene 6).

1. Act IV Scene 1.

In 'Pratishodh' (1937) Premi visits his native place Bundel-Khand. This play, which is again replete with the sentiment of heroic patriotism and sacrifice for the motherland, deals with the main events of the lives of Champat Rai and Chhatrasal. The plot is quite lengthy and complicated, and passes through different conspiracies and battles. The number of characters is very large (twenty three), but only half a dozen of them (including Champat Rai, Lal Kunwari, Chhatrasal, Pran Nath Prabhu, Hira Devi and Vijaya) have been properly delineated. The play abounds in the heroic sentiment, but the pathetic scenes of the death of Bhim Sinh,[1] the tragic death of Champat Rai and his queen[2] and the ideal sacrifice of Vijaya[3] deeply move the readers' heart. The last words of the dying mother of Chhatrasal give its title to the play —

लालकुँवरि (टूटे हुए स्वर में) बहुत देर में आये, प्राणनाथ प्रभु! सब समाप्त हो गया! केवल एक कहानी रह जायेगी, जिसे बुंदेलों को सुना सुनाकर उन्हें देश की स्वाधीनता के लिये पागल बनाते रहना। छत्रसाल सहरा में है, उससे कह देना कि तुम्हें सब प्रकार साधन-हीन, भिखारी बना कर मां और बाप दुनियां से चल बसे! मां-बाप की मृत्यु का प्रतिशोध शत्रु से लेना न भूल जाना। (मृत्यु)
(Act I Scene 8)

Act III, Scene 3, in which Aurangzeb repents over all the bloody deeds of his life, his religious bias and his heartless treatment towards his brothers in particular and Hindus in general, is a result of author's imagination; there is no historical evidence to prove this change of Aurangzeb's mind.

In 'Svapn-Bhang' (1940) again the author picks up the Hindu-Muslim problem; the central figure in this play is that of Dara (elder brother of Aurangzeb) who was the symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity; but Dara's dream of communal harmony has not been realised till today as the author has said in the introduction —

"भारतीय इतिहास के मुस्लिम काल में दारा के समान वैभव और शक्ति की चरम-सीमा तथा कंगाली और कष्ट की पराकाष्ठा तक पहुंचने वाला पात्र दूसरा कोई नहीं है। हिन्दु-मुस्लिम एकता के लिये इस महापुरुष ने अपने जीवन की बलि देदी। उस समय दारा का जो स्वप्न-भंग हुआ, वह आज तक भंग ही पड़ा है। etc.etc.

In this play the author dwells mostly on the closing part of Dara's life, his clash with Aurangzeb and his tragic death. The audthor has been wise this time to select only a few leading characters

1. Act I Scene 4. 2. Act I Scene 8. 3. Act III Scene 6.

and, therefore, he has been able to throw sufficient light on almost all of them. The author has also tried to show[1] that the bloody and bigoted character of Aurangzeb is greatly due to the poisonous teaching and bigoted guidance of his sister Roshan Ara, who is more mean, more cunning and hard-hearted than his brother.[2] The scenes of Dara's sufferings and tragic death have become very pathetic.[3] In the last two speeches of Prakash, the author has made a strong appeal for Hindu-Muslim unity —

प्रकाश — आज एक महान स्वप्न-भंग हो गया। क्या राष्ट्रीय एकता के लिये एक महात्मा (=दारा) का बलिदान व्यर्थ जायगा। क्या दारा का स्वप्न सदा स्वप्न ही बना रहेगा। क्या भारत की भावी पीढ़ियां इस महान बलिदान को भूल जायेंगी। इस मकबरे में सोने वाली दो महान आत्मायें पुकार पुकार कर क्या कह रही हैं? हिन्दुस्तान, क्या तू इस आवाज़ को सुनेगा! सुनकर कुछ करेगा!

प्रकाश — .. ....यहां न कोई हिंदु है न मुसलमान — केवल उस 'एक' — उस खुदा — उस ब्रह्म का अलग अलग घट में प्रतिबिम्ब है। हम छाया के लिये लड़ रहे हैं और वास्तव को भूल रहे हैं। यही उस पूर्ण पुरुष दारा का सन्देश है।

In 'Mitra' (second edition 1948) again Premi gives us a message of Hindu-Muslim unity. The play deals with Alauddin's battle with the Rana of Jaisalmer; but the playwright has shown that Rana's younger son Ratna Sinh and Alauddin's commander Mahbub Khan are very intimate friends. In the battle-field they are deadly enemies, but at other places they are true friends and trust each other as such. Tired of the prolonged battle with the heroic Rajputs Alauddin asks Mahbub Khan to arrest Ratna Sinh, who, as a friend, comes to meet Mahbub everyday; but Mahbub, as a true hero, rejects this proposal (Act II Scene 3) as he is not prepared to betray his Hindu friend who trusts him so much. Mahbub also trusts Ratna Sinh so much that even during the days of battle he allows his wife and daughter to stay on in Ratna Sinh's camp (Act II Scene 6). While there is idealism in the friendship of Ratna Sinh and Mahbub, the characters of Mahakal and Tandavi have also been made very brave and patriotic (Act I Scene 6; Act II Scene 1; Scene 4, Act III Scene 6).

In 'Vish Pan' (third edition 1949) Premi deals with the theme of the great sacrifice of Krishna, princess of Mewar, who took poison

1. Act III Scene 4; 2. Ibid; 3. Act III Scene 5, Scene 7.

in order to save her motherland from destruction at the hands of the Rajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur. Both these Rajas are enamoured of the exceptional beauty of Krishna, and each wants to make her his bride; the situation gets very serious, and in order to avoid bloodshed of the soldiers of Mewar, Jaipur and Jodhpur over the question of Krishna's marriage, it is decided to get her murdered; but the brave and patriotic princess herself puts an end to her life by taking poison (hence the title of the play) and thus sacrifices her life to avoid bloodshed. While in other plays Premi preaches Hindu- Muslim unity, in this play he teaches the lesson of unity to different sections of one and the same (Hindu) nation. In the following words the author appeals for sinking personal differences and to strive together for the good of the country —

दौलतसिंह – क्यों नहीं ? प्रत्येक मनुष्य अपने कर्तव्य का पालन करे। दूसरे की त्रुटियां देखने की ओर उसका ध्यान न हो, तो बहुत कुछ अनायास ही हो जाय। हमें देशहित को निजहित और निजमान के ऊपर स्थान देकर त्याग और उदारता का परिचय देना चाहिए। etc. etc. (Act III Scene 4)

दौलत० – क्यों नहीं ? यह देश हमारी सबकी मां है ! यह हमारा सबका समान रूप से पालन करती है – हम सब भाई एक होकर अपनी मां का मान बढ़ायें – अपने देश को शक्तिशाली बनायें ! संकुचित मनोवृत्ति छोड़कर विस्तृत दृष्टिकोण से प्रत्येक बात को देखें।

(Act III Scene 4)

'Krishna Kumari' of Rup Narayan Pandey, which is a translation [1] of Michael Madhusudan Datt's drama, also deals with the same theme; But Premi's play has one distinctive feature; in addition to mere historical facts, Premi has introduced a deep note of patriotism, communal harmony and of sinking personal differences for the good of the country as shown above.

As Premi has said himself, [2] he does not very much value that literature which has been written with the purpose of 'art for arts' sake'; he wants literature to help in the making of society and nation. So, while in writing these plays he has attended to the dramatic beauties of his works, he has also been careful to let none of his plays escape without reflecting one contemporary problem or the other in them. Repeatedly in his plays has Premi harped upon the tune of Hindu-Muslim unity, so much so that on certain occasions

1. See page 191 above. 2. Introduction to 'Vish Pan' third edition.

he does not only touch or hint at it, but seems to be verily preaching this doctrine. Consequently some of the characters who plead this doctrine (e.g. Hamayun, Prakash, etc.) remain no more than symbols of this feeling; still the playwright has been able to infuse a spirit of individuality and independent feelings in some of his imaginary characters like Shyama of 'Raksha Bandhan' and Vijaya of 'Pratishodh'.

As Premi was deeply influenced by contemporary movements and spirit of service and sacrifice for the country, he has introduced certain characters in his plays who has a definite message for the audience. The characters of Vina (स्वप्न-भंग) Charini (Raksha-Bandhan'), Vijaya (Pratishodh) and even of Karm Vati (Raksha-Bandhan), Jahan Ara (Svapn-Bhang) and Zeb-un-Nisa (Shiva Sadhana) bring to the world the message of brotherhood, patriotism and selfrespect. Again, the characters of Pran Nath Prabhu, ('Pratishodh'), Prakash ('Svapna-Bhang') Ram Das ('Shiva-Sadhana') and Shah Sheikh ('Raksha-Bandhan') have been specially introduced to preach to the world the noble ideals of mankind.

With the exception of 'Shiva-Sadhana' (which has five acts) all the above plays have three acts each. As Premi is a protagonist of Hindu-Muslim unity, the language that he has used is Hindustani, i.e. mixed Hindi and Urdu; all his characters, whether Hindu, Muslim or Portugese, speak correct Hindustani. Although Premi has introduced appropriate songs in all his plays, they get too frequent and even undesirable in 'Svapna-Bhang'. The author has achieved great success in plot-construction and characterization;[1] regarding his dialogue which is very lively, forceful and natural. Pt. Ram Chandra Shukla[2] writes —

"श्री हरिकृष्ण प्रेमी के कथोपकथन 'प्रसाद' जी के कथोपकथनों से अधिक नाटकोपयुक्त हैं। उनमें प्रसंगानुसार बातचीत का चलता स्वाभाविक ढंग भी है और सर्वहृदयग्राह्य पद्धति पर भाषा का मर्म-व्यंजक अनूठापन भी। 'प्रसाद' जी के नाटकों में एक ही ढंग की चित्रमयी और लच्छेदार बातचीत करने वाले कई पात्र आ जाते हैं। 'प्रेमी' जी के नाटकों में यह खटकने वाली बातें नहीं मिलती।"

Another important feature of Premi's plays is that they are very appropriate for stage-performance. The author takes special care

1. Dr. Som Nath Gupta: Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas, page 239 ~~page 484~~. 2. Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihas (Panjab edition), page ~~239~~ 484

to make them fit for the stage,[1] interesting and not beyond the grasp of common man.

'Mukti-Yajna' (1937) of Prof. Satyendra also deals with the life of Chhatrasal which Premi's 'Pratishodh' has also dwelt upon. The author has named this play 'Mukti-Yajna' (Sacrifice of liberation), because the fight for independence (which this play describes) is certainly a sacrifice of liberation.[2] It is a good play, and in the character of Chhatrasal the playwright has, in a way, appealed to the youth of the country to strive for the independence of their country. The playwright seems to have depended on the Marathi novel[3] 'Chhatrasala' for his plot, as all the important details of this play (e.g. the death of Pahar Sinh though contrary to historical evidence, and the attempt of Roshan Ara to kill Aurangzeb (Act I Scene 11)) agree with those of that novel. Even the opening and the closing scenes of this play have faithfully followed the opening and the closing chapters of that Marathi novel.

In the following words of Pran Nath Prabhu, the playwright emphasises the need of national unity and enterprise for the independence of the motherland —

प्राणनाथ – अहः तुम कैसे वीर हो – छत्रसाल तू धन्य है। और दलपति शुभकरण तुम सभी धन्य हो। तुम्हारे उद्योग से सारा खण्ड एक हो गया! एकता ही स्वतन्त्रता है। यदि – अब औरंगजेब चाहे तब भी तुम्हें अपने अधीन नहीं कर सकता। संसार की कोई शक्ति किसी पर उसकी इच्छा के विरुद्ध शासन नहीं कर सकती – औरंगज़ेब तो क्या चीज़ है। (Act III Scene 10)

In the end the author has introduced two super-natural scenes (in this historical drama), which appear as reminiscences of Parsi theatrical drama —

प्राणनाथ – आह – यह आनन्द उन्माद – यह क्या – वह देखो, देवी विन्ध्यवासिनी कैसी प्रसन्न प्रतीत होती है। (पर्दे की ओर इशारा करते हैं – पर्दा फटता है – देवी प्रकट होती हैं उसके दोनों ओर अप्सराएं नाच रही हैं।) (Act III Scene 10)

Again (तीव्र प्रकाश के साथ स्वर्ग में चम्पतराय प्रकट होते हैं और फूल बरसाते हैं) (Act III Scene 10)

'Jay Parajay' (1937) of Upendra Nath Ashk again takes us to Mewar, and deals with the qualities of patriotism, self-respect and benevolence. But unlike Premi, Ashk has not written this play with a view to put before the audience these qualities of Rajput character; he, on the other hand, has written it in order to give vent to the

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1. Introduction to 'Svapn Bhang'
2. See Foreword to the play by B. Gulab Rai.
3. Translated into Hindi by B. Ram Chandra Varma (1916) & published by Hindi-Granth-Ratnakar Karyalay, Bombay

agitation and conflict of his own mind, as he has said in the introduction. Besides dealing with the facts of history, the author has tried to depict the conflict between जय (victory) and पराजय (defeat)(and hence the title of the play) in the lives of his important characters including Chand, Hansa, Ran Mall etc. Chand's character is a constant struggle between victory and defeat, and very dramatic is the last scene of the play in which Hari Sinh requests Chand again and again not to leave Mewar, but Chand firmly marches on his path of conflict between victory and defeat.

The action of the play begins from the second act, and all the scenes of the first act have been introduced for the creation of atmosphere. But, in spite of the scarcity of action in Act I, the author has not allowed it to be lifeless and dull, and his stage experience has enabled him to infuse due life and interest in it. The character of Chand is very idealistic, and his self-effacement and sacrifice make him a memorable figure. But the playwright has not been able to put sufficient force in Chand's argument, when the latter decides to look upon Hansa as his mother, simply because his father expressed a desire for her in a joke (Act II Scene 1). The characters of Hansa and Bharmali are also very lively and well-portrayed. The play is nice for the purpose of presentation on the stage.

'Raj Mukut' (1935) of Govind Vallabh Pant selects for his theme the ideal sacrifice of Panna, the nurse of Uday Sinh, who saved her child-master's life by sacrificing her own son instead. There is plenty of action in this play, and the plot has been successfully knit together on the whole. The characters of Panna, Shital Seni and Ranjit have been delineated with care and skill. The playwright has depicted Panna not only as an embodiment of sacrifice, but as a brave Rajputani also when she stops Ban Vir from arresting Vikram — पन्ना – (कमरसे कटार खींचकर) यह क्या बनवीर! सावधान! मैं धाई ही नहीं, राजपूतनी भी हूं। मेरे जीवित रहते कोई महाराना को बंदी नहीं कर सकता। (विक्रम की रक्षा करती है) (Act I Scene 3)

Again there is great force and self-confidence in her words when she decides to save Uday from Ban Vir at every cost —

पन्ना – (भाव बदलकर) तब उदय को यहीं रहने दो। (उत्तेजित होकर) मैं उसकी राह रोक लूंगी,

"उसका हाथ झटक तलवार छीन लूंगी। तलवार के टुकड़े-टुकड़े कर फेंक दूंगी। सावित्री ने यम के पंजे से अपने स्वामी को छुड़ाया था, क्या मैं मनुष्य के हाथ से अपने स्वामी के पुत्र को न छुड़ा सकूंगी? अवश्य छुड़ाऊंगी। (Act I Scene 7)

But the idealism of Panna gets typical when in the end, (Act III Scene 6) she forgives Ban Vir, who killed her son and put her and her master to so much torment and suffering.

The character of Shital-Sani (Ban Vir's mother) is very powerful; she is very revengeful and ambitious (Act I Scene I and Scene 2); very bold are her following words addressed to Vikram —

शीतलसेनी —.......नीच दासी! इन अपमानजनक शब्दों को याद रखना, विक्रम! तूने नागिन की पूंछ दबाई है।

विक्रम — मैं उसका सिर भी कुचल दूंगा।

शीतल० — मैं उससे पहले ही तेरा मुकुट चूर्ण कर दूंगी, तेरा सिंहासन उलट दूंगी, तुझे समूल नष्ट कर दूंगी। (Act I scene I)

And in order to achieve this end she wins Ranjit over to her side by promising (Act II Scene 2) to make him the Primie Minister of Mewar; she further exhorts Ban Vir against Vikram to such an extent that the same Ban Vir who was sincerely devoted to Vikram and said " तुम्हें हानि पहुंचाकर इन्द्रासन भी न लूंगा "(Act I Scene 1), later on killed Vikram and also tried to kill Uday Sinh. The playwright has depicted Ban Vir as a puppet in the hands of his ambitious mother, and all the bloody deeds of the play are the outcome of the conspiracies and instigations of Shital Seni.

Like his other dramas (e.g. Var Mala) the playwright has made this drama also suitable for the stage; his dialogue is quite simple and lively and he has introduced several scenes which are very forceful and dramatic. While the scenes of Chandan's murder (Act I Scene 7) and Panna's carrying his dead body (Act II Scene I) are very pathetic, the scene of Shital Seni's death has become very unnatural and radiculous (Act III, Scene 5). The playwright should have shown greater skill and genius by describing the end of this powerful but villainous character in some other way.

In his introduction to 'Dahar' or 'Sindh Patan' (1933) Uday Shankar Bhatta refers to the theme of his play in the following words

"....हमारी जातीयता में धर्मवाद की निकम्मी, थोथी रूढ़ियों ने हमें विवेक से गिरा दिया, मनुष्यत्व से खींचकर दासता, भ्रातृविद्रोह, विवेकशून्यता के गड्ढे में ले जाकर मार डाला, पीस दिया। आज जिस नाटक को लेकर मैं हिंदी संसार के सम्मुख उपस्थित हो रहा हूं उसमें इसी

प्रकार का इतिवृत्त है। यही गाथा है। इसमें यदि एक ओर वीरता है तो उसी के अंक में छिपा हुआ पशुत्व अपना अकाण्डताण्डव दिखा रहा है। यदि एक जगह देश-प्रेम का उत्कट आदर्श है तो उसी के दायें, बायें, नीचे छल, कपट और नीच वासना रूप सांपनी अपनी विषाक्त जीभ लपलपाये देशप्रेम को चाट डालना चाहती है। अपनी अपनी डफली अपना अपना राग है।" etc.

In this way in a lengthy introduction the author refers to the theme of the play and enumerates various causes that led to the downfall of Sindh. The play describes various events leading to the fall of Sindh at the hands of the Arabs, and the vengeance that Dahar's young daughters, Surya Devi and Parmal Devi wreaked on the enemy of their motherland and their father by getting him put to death by the order of the Khalifa.

The diction of the play has been influenced by the philosophic and poetic style of Prasad;[2] for example the following lengthy speech of Dahar, although interesting for its variety of ideas, is undramatic and even unnatural in course of conversation—

दाहर — कहीं सत्यरूप से स्पष्ट, कहीं असत्यरूप से अस्थिर, कहीं कोमलाङ्गिनी वारांगना के समान छलमयी, समय के उलटफेर में, हिंसा की उग्रता में, दयालुता के आंचल में, स्वार्थ के उत्संग में, उदारता की ओट में, धन-रत्न के प्रलोभन में राजनीति अपनी कार्यसाधना में सन्नद्ध रहती है। यह चरों के चक्षुओं से, न्याय के कान से, निश्चय के मुख से, सन्देहमय संकल्प से सब का निर्णय करती है। etc-etc. (Act I Scene 2)

Such lengthy speeches (in course of conversation) remind us of Bana's style, and while they may add to the beauty of a novel (like Bana's 'Kadambari) they retard the speed of dialogue and the movement of drama. Besides lengthy speeches there is a large number of soliloquies[3] in this play, which considerably diminish the dramatic charm of the play. The playwright has also made ~~to~~ the language of his characters very difficult and all these things have ~~been~~ made his play unfit for the stage.[4]

In the development of plot also the playwright has not shown adequate skill; there is plenty of action in the play, and a good many scenes and situations could have been made very forceful and dramatic; but the author has dealt with them in a very ordinary

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~~1. E.G. Act I Scene 7.~~
2. Dr. Nagendra: Adhunik Hindi Natak, page 43.
3. E.G. Dahar's very long soliloquy in Act I Scene 2; Parmal's two soliloquies with songs in Act II Scene 2; Jay Shah long soliloquey in Act IV Scene 2; Qasim's two soliloquies in Act IV Scene 4 etc.
4. Same as in (2).

manner; for instance, the event of Mohd Qasim's death could have been represented in a very forceful and tragic manner, and it could have given opportunity to the playwright to go deep into the mind of Qasim, but he has just made a reference to it in a conversation (Act V Scene 2). In the same way the last scene of the suicide of Surya Devi and Parmal Devi lacks necessary force and life.

However, the playwright has achieved ample success in characterisation; there is individuality and life at least in the characters of Qasim, Manu, Dahar and Surya Devi. The author has borrowed the conception of the appearance of ghost from Shakespeare's Hamlet and other plays; in Act IV Scene 4 Qasim falls down senseless, being terrified by the grinning of Dahar's ghost. This trick, though nice for dramatic effect, is not very consistent, because a resolute and bigoted Muslim like Qasim cannot conceive the idea of the ghost of his foe, whom he killed in the battlefield; the idea of the ghost is contrary to Islamic conceptions.

'Kulinata' (Ist edition 1941; Second revised and enlarged edition 1948) of Seth Govind Das also belongs to this category of plays, as it deals with events of medieval Indian history. But in addition to dealing with historical facts, Seth, like Premi, has discussed a contemporary problem of his country also in this play. The movement of untouchability, which received great support and strength from the personality of Mahatma Gandhi, has influenced the playwright, who has seized an opportunity in this play of discussing whether कुलीनता (nobility) is given by birth or is won by personal enterprise. The orthodox society has been attributing कुलीनता to birth, while enterprising and ambitious persons attribute[1] it to personal valour and virtue. Yadu Rai, the hero of this play is humiliated (like Karna of the Mahabharat)[2] by the so-called high-born people for his low birth. In a feeling of injured pride and sensibility he says —

"ये हमें पशुओं से भी निकृष्ट समझते हैं। हममें कितने ही उच्च गुण क्यों न हों, हम उनके राज्य में किसी भी उत्तरदायी पद पर आसीन नहीं हो सकते। हम कितने ही सुन्दर क्यों न हों, हम उनकी कन्याओं से विवाह नहीं कर सकते। हम कितने ही स्वच्छ क्यों न हों, हमारा छुआ हुआ भोजन उनके खाने योग्य नहीं रह जाता। इतना ही नहीं, यदि देश पर विपत्ति

1. See Seth's 'Karna' also page 228 below. 2. Second edition Act I Scene 4.

आये तो यद्यपि हम उनकी अपेक्षा इस देश के पुराने निवासी हैं, हमें अपने देश की रक्षा करने का भी अधिकार नहीं है।" (Act I scene 6, first edition)

The author has well constructed the plot and there is regularity and link in the sequence of events. In characterisation the play-wright seems to have shown partiality to low-born characters, whom he depicts in ideal colours. Yadu Rai and Nag Dev, both low-born characters have been depicted as ideal friends, heroes and patriots; on the other hand the characters of some of high-born persons (especially of Chand Pid) have been pulled down in nobility and virtue. The characters of Vindhya Bala, Rewa Sundari and Surabhi Pathak have also been skilfully delineated. As in his 'Harsha' and 'Shashigupta', so here also Seth has drawn minute word-pictures of persons and palaces, and glorious pictures of the grandeur of medieval Indian courts etc. in long stage-directions.

The first edition shows signs of infancy when compared with the second edition; in the second edition the entire play has been overhauled, and beside several scenes the whole of the first act (of the 2nd edition) is not to be found in the first edition. In the end the author has emphasized कर्मजात कुलीनता in the following words —

विजयदेवसिंह — जिन्हें कुछ समय पूर्व जिस धर्म के अनुसार जिस राज्य में प्राणदण्ड की व्यवस्था दी गई थी, उसी धर्म के अनुसार उसी राज्य में उन्हीं का यह उत्कर्ष, इस बात को सिद्ध कर देता है कि संसार में कर्म ही मुख्य है और कुलीनता कर्म पर निर्भर रहती है।

(2nd Edition Act IV Scene 7

Having dealt with these historical plays one by one we may add a few general remarks on them. First of all we find that, in addition to dealing with historical facts, the playwrighrs have touched or discussed some of the contemporary problems or feelings in their plays, they were in fact instigated by various contemporary problems and therefore in their plays they have something to say on Hindu-Muslim unity, patriotic sacrifice for the independence of the country, national unity or untouchability etc. Then we find that these plays are mostly marked with a rush of events and actions, and there is more of action than philosophising or discussion. Their leading characters (e.g. Chhatrasal; Champat Rai, Hammir, Mahima Shah, Shiva Ji, Chand. Ban Vir etc.) are strictly practical persons, who have little time to ponder over the conflicting emotions of their hearts, and their

character generally lacks the quality of psycho-analytical study. Moreover, the leading characters of all of these plays are prompted by some powerful emotions, may be of Hindu-Muslim unity (e.g.Humayun Karmavati, Prakash, Hamir, Ratna Sinh) or untouchability (Yadu Rai), or family prestige (Chhatrasal, Laksh Sinh,Hammir), Rajput valour (Chhatrasal, Shiva Ji, Champat Rai, Chand, Yadu Rai),forgiveness (Panna, Shah Jahan) or revenge (Shital-Seni,Surya Devi). These emotions are so powerful in some of these characters, that they sometimes lose their independent existence and remain no more than mere personifications of their respective qualities. Prompted by a strong feeling of patriotism, most of these playwrights sing the songs of chivalry, patriotism, selfrespect, love of independence, spirit of brotherhood and various other qualities of their medieval heroes; at the same time they describe the disastrous consequences of their mutual jealousies, narrow-mindness, class-pride and religious bigotry with a view to purge their fellow countrymen of those unhealthy feelings.

The atmosphere of these plays is generally feudal, full of mutual jealousies, fraternal strifes, neighbourly hostilities and lust for power and position. The ideals they present are not the subtle and sublime sentiments of the soul, but the call of duty, selfrespect and worldly ambition. In many cases the leading characters of some of these plays labour under a spirit of false pride and egoism or superiority complex; it might be their family prestige or their personal pride of word or deed that prompts them to tread their hard thorny path of troubles and sufferings (e.g. Chhatrasal, Hammir, Chand). Their viewpoint is not broad and cosmopolitan but narrow and restricted; and by their country or motherland they do not mean the whole of India, but only Mewar, Marwar, Bundel Khand or Maharashtra etc. Their patriotism generally means the service of and sacrifice for their respective states and provinces. They do not look upon fighting against their neighbours or kinsmen as unpatriotic or disgraceful; they will ruin the future of their country and will not hesitate in doing the greatest harm or disservice to it, if it satisfies their personal ego or lust for power (e.g. Hiradevi, Shital-Seni, Ranjit, Surjan Sinh).

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CHAPTER XX

MYTHOLOGICAL DRAMA

With the fast-increasing influence of Western education and culture, people diminished their blind faith in mythology, and instead of revelling in remote mythological themes, they began to take greater interest in contemporary problems.[1] Consequently mythological drama became less popular and we come across very few mythological dramas in this period.

Leading mythological plays of this period are Uday Shankar Bhatta's 'Amba' (1935) & 'Sagar- Vijaya' (1937), Premi's 'Patal-Vijay', Ugra's 'Ganga Ka Beta' (1940), Kailash Nath Bhatnagar's 'Shri Vatsa' (1941) and Seth Govind Das's 'Karna (कर्ण)' (1946). In 'Amba', U.S. Bhatta takes us to the times of Mahabharata. The three daughters of the Raja of Kashi are forcibly carried away by Bhishma for his step-brother Vichitra Virya; of these three princesses, Ambika and Ambalika agree to be the wives of Vichitra Virya, but Amba refuses to do so as she had already chosen Shalv as her lord in her mind. Accordingly, she is sent back to Shalv, but the latter now refuses to accept her as his wife; the stigma of Amba's having been carried away by another man is the cause of his reluctance. Amba, who refused to accept Vichitra Virya in her height of morality and faithfulness, now gets beside herself with rage at this disgraceful treatment of Shalv. The words that she uttered while leaving Shalv's court are full of wrath and despair —

"...... किन्तु जाती हुई एक बार, हां एक बार तुमसे कहे देती हूं, कि इसी मान अपमान की आग में, इसी क्षात्रियत्व की अविवेकिनी अग्निशिखा में इस पापी समाज का अनन्तकाल के लिये नाश होगा। वीरता और विवेक की आंखों से देखने का झूठा आडम्बर रखने वाली क्षत्रिय जाति को सुदूर भविष्य में दास, निकृष्ट दास बनना होगा। ...."

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1. See page 195-6 above.

Amba now makes a firm resolve to wreak vengeance upon Bhishma, the real cause of her disgrace and downfall. She approaches Parshuram for help, but the latter suffers a defeat at the hands of Bhishma. Then she propitiates Shiva and gets the boon of Bhishma's destruction in her next birth. As soon as she gets this boon, she drowns herself in Ganga in order to assume second birth for taking revenge. She is reborn in the form of Shikhandi, who is ultimately responsible for Bhishma's death.

The closing scene of the play is very dramatic and impressive. Bhishma is lying on a bed of arrows; the past events of his life, especially the story of Amba, her abduction, her offer to marry Bhishma and the latter's refusal etc. are passing through his mind one after the other. The agitation of Bhishma's mind is growing with these thoughts, and when asked by Krishna and others, Vyas explains the cause of this agitation as follows —

"काशीराज की कन्या अंबा की प्रतिहिंसा का फल भीष्म को भुगतना पड़ रहा है....एक स्त्री के अनादर का फल यह महाभारत हुआ, और दूसरी स्त्री के अनादर का फल भीष्म की मृत्यु।"

As Bhishma breathes his last, Amba (in the form of Shikhandi) suddenly appears on the stage in an agitated condition and then quickly quits the stage.

Though a mythological drama, 'Amba' deals also with the problem of modern woman in a nice way. Amba in fact represents that class of modern woman which intends to establish its right of independence and to shake off its old servility to orthodox man.

The plot of 'Sagar- Vijay' is still more complicated, and it deals with a long series of events pertaining to the life of Sagar, the famous king of the solar dynasty. The play abounds in intrigues and domestic plots, repeated attempts at the life of Sagar by his step-mother, the subsequent death of his step-mother and his own mother and his ultimate vow of the service of his country. In this play the characters of Sagar and his step-mother (Barhi) have been delineated with force and interest and in order to depict the various sides of the latter's character the author has made a frequent use of soliloqies.

In these plays, especially in his 'Amba' Bhatta has shown great maturity of dramatic art than in his historical play 'Dahar' (discussed in the previous chapter). In the diction of his plays we find a clear impression of Prasad, and like Prasad Bhatta too has introduced poetic and philosphic speeches and phrases which retard the progress of the plot and its due enjoyment.

'Ganga Ka Beta' (1940) of Bechan Sharma Ugra deals with the life of Bhishma; it begins with a glimpse of his previous life among the eight Vasus (Act I Scene I) and closes with the scene when he lay on the bed of arrow and Arjun brought water for him from underneath the earth with his arrow. Alongside of this main plot, a very humorous side-plot has been introduced. Old Jwala Datta Sharma who hates the very sight of the Kshatriyas, is suddenly turned into a young man by the incidental sight of King Shantanu (Act I Scene 7); but his wife is still old. Extremely humorous are those scenes where we meet Jwala Datta in the form of a young husband, with his old withered wife who looks older than his mother (Act II Scene 3 and Scene 5;). And when his old wife, disgusted with her old age goes out to commit suicide (Act II Scene 12), but is perchance made young by the 'darshan' of Parvati she feels very happy. In the meantime her young husband approaches Parshu Ram and prays to him for return of his old age (Act II Scene 10). Now Jwala Datta gets old again (Act II Scene 13) but his wife has turned quite young. The scene is very funny when the old husband is turned out of her cottage by his young wife (Act II Scene 14).

From the point of view of dramatic art the work does not rise above mediocrity. Even the playwright has not succeeded in depicting the atmosphere of those times in a faithful and realistic manner; he has even used Urdu words occasionally during conversation; e.g. ऋषि वशिष्ठ – भद्र! सारे संसार में तत्व हैं <u>महज़</u> पांच ..... etc. (Act I Scene I)

Due to the presence of these words and cheap fun of the subordinate plot we cannot forget that the atmosphere of the plays is modern and not mythological.

The theme of 'Shri-Vatsa' is very similar to that of Bharatendu's 'Satya Harishchandra'. It is again a story of the sufferings of a truthful king (Shri Vatsa) and his family at the hands of god Shani, who in the end discards his guise of the devil and blesses the hero with long life and prosperity.

Seth's 'Karna कर्ण' is a very interesting and artistic mythological drama, which has much in common with his historical plays like 'Harsha', 'Shashi Gupta'. The plot faithfully follows the Mahabharata, and the playwright has not made any major change in Karna's character[1] or in any other important event of the play; but he has given his own original interpretation to Karna's deeds, as he admits—

"मेरा मत है कि नाटक, उपन्यास या कहानी-लेखक को यह अधिकार नहीं है कि किसी भी पुरानी कथा को तोड़-मरोड़ कर उसे एक नयी कथा ही बना दे। हां, कथा का अर्थ (interpretation) वह अवश्य अपने मतानुसार कर सकता है।"(2)

The play begins with the scene of the competition of military feats of the Pandavas and the Kauravas, and records the first and most important event in the life of Karna that made him a sworn enemy of the Pandavas: when in the exhibition of military feats Karna challenges Arjuna for a duel, he is not allowed to do so because he is not highborn while Arjun is the son of a king. Karna argues that —

कर्ण – (गर्व से) ..... जन्म तो दैवाधीन है, आचार्य, पौरुष स्वयं के आधीन। मुझे अपने कुल का परिचय देने की आवश्यकता ही नहीं, वह मेरे हाथ में नहीं। मेरे हाथ में है मेरा पौरुष, तथा मेरा पौरुष ही मेरा सच्चा परिचय है। etc. etc. (उपक्रम)

Now Duryodhana comes to his help; inspired by the wonderful martial feats of Karna he wants to win him over to his side (as he wants to destroy the Pandavas) by offering him the throne of Anga territory. This single act of kindness makes Karna ever-bound to Duryodhana and he takes the oath of helping him through thick and thin all his life —

कर्ण – अपनी ओर से वचन देता हूं। विश्व की कोई भी शक्ति आजन्म मुझे तुमसे न विमुख कर सकेगी और न पृथक, और मेरी सारी शक्ति सदा तुम्हारे काम आवेगी।"

In this way while Karna took the oath of standing by Duryodhana on the very first day of his meeting with him, he became an avowed enemy of the Pandavas due to the insult done to him by Bhima and

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1. See Introduction to the play 2. Ibid.

others for his low-birth. As the play has been named 'Karna'; the playwright has depicted only the character of Karna thoroughly, and has tried to raise him as high as possible. The play depicts the constant struggle that goes on in the mind of Karna between different emotions; he is not wicked or mean like Duryodhana, but he takes the side of Duryodhana in all ignoble deeds simply due to his oath which has been referred above. In the very opening scene of the play we find Karna looking thoughtfully at the wooden box in which Kunti put him while throwing him in the river; he has been told by his सूत father (Adhirath) that he is in fact the son of Kunti and Surya. The introduction of this wooden box (मंजूषा) is the ingenious invention of the playwright; this has given him several opportunities of depicting Karna's mental conflict. By nature Karna has been shown very noble, and again and again his inherent noble qualities take hold of him (e.g. in Act I Scene 1; Act II Scene 1, Scene 4; Act IV Scene 4) and he wants to give up his enmity towards the righteous Pandavas; but at that very time he looks at the Manjusha, suddenly gets beside himself with rage, and again gets resolute in his idea of taking revenge. In fact this wooden box and the idea of insult at the hands of the Pandavas due to his low-birth (See उपक्रम) make him hard-hearted and cruel.

In this way the entire character of Karna is an account of the mental conflict of his contending emotions. The author has also very delicately depicted different emotions of Kunti's mind too (e.g. in the उपक्रम, Kunti's soliloquy in Act I Scene 4; etc.) For the proper depiction of this conflict in the minds of Karna and Kunti, Seth has made use of soliloquy[1] on several occasions.

The plot, which closely follows Mahabharata for all leading events, has been well-constructed; in characterisation the author has deliberately dwelt only upon the character of Karna, whom he wants to raise in the eyes of the audience. The atmosphere of this play is mostly like that of Seth's 'Shashi Gupta' and 'Harsha', but in this play the author has introduced a number of scenes,[2] which can be

1. Karna's soliloquy in Act I Scene 1; Act II Scene 1, Act III Scene 5, Act IV Scene 5; & Kunti's soliloquy in Act I Scene 4; in Act III Scene 2;
2. E.g. the scene of military feats in the उपक्रम ; Act III Scene I, Act V Scene 4 etc. and Scene of उपसंहार

displayed successfully only on the screen and the author has himself admitted this fact.

Out of these mythological plays, Bhatta's 'Amba' and Seth's 'Karna' have great artistic merit. But besides dramatic art both these plays have one more important feature; they do not deal only with ~~the~~ mythological themes, but also reflect and discuss some burning contemporary problems. In 'Amba' as we have already said the problem is that of the modern progressive woman who revolts against domination of man and fights for her right of independence. In 'Karna' the problem of untouchability or, in broader sense, that of caste dependent on birth or action has been emphasized. Karna strong--ly supports (See उपक्रम) that caste should depend on one's actions and deeds of this life and not on one's birth. Besides the problem of caste, Seth has raised the problem of marriage and public scandal in this play — (Act I Scene 4)

कुन्ती — ......आह! जन्म देने वाली माता हत्या करने वाली डाकिनी हो गयी।...और कारण? — सामाजिक भय। (फिर चौकी पर बैठकर) युधिष्ठिर, भीम, अर्जुन के जन्म तथा उसके जन्म में यही — यही तो अन्तर है न कि ये तीनों विवाह के पश्चात् हुए और वह विवाह से पूर्व। .....विवाह के पश्चात् की सन्तान पति से न होकर किसी अन्य से भी हो तो भी समाज को ग्राह्य है। (कुछ रुककर) और...और जब विवाह-संस्था ही न थी तब?...प्राचीन सामाजिक संगठन में विवाह ही न था...इसका निर्माण हुआ है अधिक सुख के लिये।...पर...पर क्या इससे अधिक सुख हुआ?

These words of Kunti are a sharp satire on the nature and working of Hindu society.

In this way these mythological plays can, in a way, be called problem plays.

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CHAPTER XXI

PROBLEM PLAYS

The realistic tendency in Hindi drama is a result of contact with the West and its culture which led our writers to a critical attitude toward the old social order. In the beginning of this century, a strong reaction against romanticism appeared in the drama of the West; a few years later this very reaction appeared in Hindi drama too as a direct borrowing from Western drama. While in Western drama this reaction appeared gradually and after many stages, Hindi drama suddenly developed this realistic tendency under the influence of Ibsen and Shaw.[1]

Definition of Realism

" Realism is a more or less conscious reaction to romanticism. The realist objects to the limitations on subject-matter imposed by the romantic point of view. He objects to the amount of idealisation inherent in the process of investing the chosen subject-matter with glamour. The extravagances and extremities of the romantic spirit he dismisses with the charge that they are untrue to life, or at least to his conception of life."[2] "Realism apes the impartiality and impersonality of the scientist; it imitates the scientist's freedom from prejudice, his lack of conventional, intellectual or moral inhibitious. Its aim, at its clearest, is to represent life as nearly as possible as the scientist sees it."[3] To the realist, as to the scientist, nor only the universe but man also is a mechanism: his personality, an inevitable product of the forces of heredity and environment; his physique, a psycho-physical organism; and his

1. Dr. Nagendra: Adhunik Hindi Natak; page 53.
2. Millet and Bentley: The Art of the Drama, page 146.
3. Ibid.

conduct, not the product of character and free will but of chemical and physical process over which he has no control.[1]

Today, several reputed playwrights have devoted themselves to the writing of problem plays, which are dominated by a strong tendency of realism. Pt. Lakshmi Narayan Mishra, Seth Govind Das, Prithvi Nath Sharma, Uday Shankar Bhatta, Upendra Nath Ashk and a few other writers have written a good number of plays on contemporary problems of the individual and of society. As these playwrights have been deeply influenced by Ibsen and other realistic playwrights of the West, their problem plays are obviously motivated by a spirit of reaction against romanticism. Like them they also look upon the modern period as essentially an era of intellectualism and psycho-analysis; instead of revelling in their glorious past, the realistic playwrights deal with the domestic problems of everyday life with contemporary social or political problems.

They do not make any effort to charm the audience by a set of exciting incidents; rather the playwrights invite them into a quiet room and ask them to watch the characters, watch the expressions of their joys and sorrows, and through those joys and sorrows reach to some understanding of their inner selves.[2] They resort to a style of psycho-analysis in their plays and their characters give expression to the latent feelings of their hearts.

As in subject-matter and style, so in technique also these play-wrights have borrowed a lot from the West. There is a strong tendency in their realistic dramas to simply the treatment of plot; but their characters tend to be more complex than mostly in romantic drama, as the characters here are often composites of a large number of varying and contradictory impulses. The use of music and dance has been discarded in their plays; the soliloquy and the 'aside', so useful to romantic playwrights for depicting the minds of their chief characters, have been set aside in most cases. Lengthy stage-directions are a characteristic feature of their plays, and scenes of daily life have been portrayed with great effort and interest.

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1. Bentley & Millet: The Art of Drama; page 146-7.
2. Nicoll: British Drama page 342

Today our private and public lives are beset with so many complications; the intellectual and critical outlook on life has led to several problems of the individual and of society. Consequently we find two types of problem plays, firstly those which deal with the problems of the individual and secondly those plays which deal with social and political problems.

Today, sex is one of the foremost problems of the individual of the world, and to some extent of India too. According to Froude sexual instinct works at the basis of the entire business of the world. In India (and perhaps in the world also) the problems of sex arise from certain clashes with the institution of marriage. Fundamentally, sex is only a question of personal and individual concern, but it has been rigidly bound by the institution of marriage. In this way a matter of independent and individual concern has been turned into a social order; and ultimately the free sexual instincts of the individual often come into conflict with the rigid social order of marriage. The sex-instinct of the educated Indian has got strength from the bold influence of Western ways of life, as a result of which social intercourse between man and woman has become more free and less restricted in our educated Westernised people. But when our West-stricken young men and women, who have started mixing freely with each other, want that very freedom in action also, they meet with vehement opposition from our orthodox people who form the bulk of our society even today. Consequently, these young people have to suppress their inner impulse against their will; they receive the stimulus from Western ways of life, but they get the rebuff from the orthodox nature of our social order. This clash between their unrestrained youthful instincts and the rigidity of the social order gives rise to several problems and complications connected with the sex.

Lakshmi Narayan Mishra is practically the first Hindi dramatist who studies man in the new social conditions and analyses the fresh problems of the day.[1] It is obvious from the prefaces to his

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1. Dr. Inder Nath Madan: Modern Hindi Literature; page 115.

problem plays[1] that he has been inspired by continental and British dramatists; obviously, Ibsen and Shaw have considerably influenced his mode of art. Mishra is the leading Hindi playwright who has dealt with the problem of sex in his plays. He has written a number of problem plays, viz. 'Sanyasi', 'Rakshas Ka Mandir', 'Mukti Ka Rahasya', 'Adhi Rat', 'Sindur Ki Holi', 'Raj Yog' etc. and the chief problems of all these plays, in one form to the other, is sex.

'Sanyasi' (1929) is Mishra's first play in which two parallel conflicts are separately shown. Malati, a young student, who falls in love with her young class-mate (Vishv Kant) strikes the major key in the play. At the same time her professor (Rama Shanker) also develops a weakness for her, outwits the young student and marries the girl. Getting disappointed Vishv-Kant becomes a Sanyasi and hence the title of the play. Another interesting problem is created by an elderly professor Dina Nath who marries a very upto-date young girl, Kiranmayi. This girl later attaches herself to her husband's friend Murali Dhar, an editor, but the fellow dies of consumption in a jail. In the end, the two couples arrive at a compromise, although there is much of helplessness than sweet will in their compromise.

Malati and Kiranmayi, the female characters in the play are very bold towards men; but such bold girls were rarely to be found in Hindu society at the time when this play was written. Other characters are intended to represent certain ideas; the old professor is a sample of old social order; Vishv Kant, the disappointed young man is a satire on romantic love; and the two girls are the typical product of the modern age characterising personal liberty in marriage and sex.

In 'Rakshas Ka Mandir' (?), Asgari, a concubine is the pivot of interest in the first half of the play. She is the keep of Ram Lal, a lawyer who stands for life of prudery and sham respectability. The wayward woman also entraps the son of the lawyer; and later on Munishwar, who is already married, takes a fancy to her. When they make

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1. See preface to 'Sanyasi', 'Mukti Ka Rahasya' 'Rakshas Ka Mandir' etc

love to each other, his (Munishwar's) wife appears on the scene to intensify the piquancy of the delicate situation. When she reminds her husband of the sacred vow of monogamy, he ridicules it —

दुर्गावती — मैं यह जानती हूं — लेकिन आप मेरे कामके क्यों नहीं रहे ? आपने मेरा हाथ नहीं पकड़ा .... उस दिन ... उस रात को ... उस मण्डप में वेदमन्त्रों के बीच .....

मुनीश्वर — (हंसते हुए) पगली .... (लड़केकी ओर एकटक देखकर) स्त्री और पुरुष के भीतर जो प्रकृति है उसकी ओर न देखकर, मण्डप, वेदमन्त्र, कन्यादान की माया में अब तक ... इतने दिन तक पड़ी रह गयी। etc. (Act I)

The story goes on through a series of episodes, which are meant to create thrills, and in the end Asgari agrees to live with Munishwar.

In 'Mukti Ka Rahasya' (1932) again, the author has led a revolt against the sacred institutions of society. Asha, the heroine, of the play, lives in the house of Uma Shankar whom she loves. Uma Shankar's wife has been ailing for a long time, and in order to make her path smooth, Asha gives poison to Uma Shankar's wife with the help of a doctor. Later on when Asha confesses her love for the doctor, Uma Shankar retires in favour of the latter and decides to live alone. Asha marries the doctor and Uma Shankar, in a fit of sentimentalism, parts with his money which is a hindrance to the ideals of socialism.

Mishra's other plays, especially his 'Raj Yog' (1934) and 'Sindur Ki Holi' (1934) also deal with the problems of sex. And in finding out a solution of this baffling problem, Mishra has been very bold. Mishra's female characters like Manorama ('Sindur Ki Holi'), Asha ('Mukti Ka Rahasya') Kiranmayi and Malati ('Sanyasi') etc. are very bold, and their attitude and action towards sex and love may not be approved by orthodox Hindu society. Most of his female characters bring about a compromise between love and marriage, thus solving their complicated sex problem. Kiranmayi loves Muralidhar while she is the wedded wife of Dinanath; Asha loves Uma Shankar and at the same time has sexual relations with the doctor; in the same way the following words of Manorama might shock the orthodox people —

मनोरमा — .... मैं विधवा हूं .... इस ज्वालामुखी को यदि मैं कुछ समय के लिये छिपा भी रखूं .... तब भी मैं किसकी बनूं तुम्हारी या डिप्टी साहब की ? जहां तक मेरी बात रही मैं तो उन्हें जी भर घृणा करना चाहती हूं और तुम्हें जी भर प्रेम .... अगर तुम मेरे प्रेम का अर्थ समझ सको .... मुझे उसका अवसर दो। मैं तुम्हें अपना दूल्हा तो नहीं बना सकती, लेकिन प्रेमी बना लूंगी। etc. ('Sindur Ki Holi' Act II, page 57-8)

love to each other. His (Samcharan's) wife objects to the secret [illegible] intensity the frequency of his [illegible] visits [illegible] when she reminds her husband of the [illegible] vow of monogamy, he [illegible]

[illegible]

The story [illegible] of [illegible] wife, which [illegible] to that [illegible] and [illegible] Anand agrees to [illegible]

In [illegible] (19[illegible]) again, the author has [illegible] [illegible] the sacred institution of marriage. [illegible] of the play, lived in the house of the Thakur when she [illegible] Thakur's wife has been ailing for a long time, and in order to make her path smooth, Anna gives poison to the Thakur's wife with the help of a doctor. Later on when Anna [illegible] her love for the doctor, the Thakur [illegible] in favour of the [illegible] and decides to live alone. Anna marries the doctor and the Thakur, in a fit of [illegible], [illegible] which is a hindrance to the [illegible] of [illegible].

[illegible] other plays, especially [illegible] (1934) and [illegible] (1934) also [illegible] the [illegible] of sex. All [illegible] of a solution [illegible] problem, [illegible] has been very bold. [illegible] like [illegible] ('[illegible]'), Asha ([illegible]) [illegible] and [illegible] ('[illegible]') etc. are very [illegible] and [illegible] sex and [illegible] may also be [illegible] morality. [illegible] characters [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] solving [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

At several places the author has disclosed the truths of the world in a sharp, bold, realistic manner —

मुरारीलाल—..... आजकल का क़ानून ही ऐसा है। इसमें सज़ा उसको नहीं दी जाती जो कि अपराध करता है .....सज़ा तो केवल उसको होती है जो अपराध छिपाना नहीं जानता। etc. 'Sindur Ki Holi' (Act I page 36).

Or,

मनोरमा—हिन्दू विधवा से बढ़कर कविता और दर्शन कहीं नहीं मिलेगा। 'Sindur Ki Holi' (Page 82 Act II)

Although Mishra has been very bold in discussing the baffling problems of love, sex and marriage and also in offering their solution, still it has to be considered whether the problems discussed in his plays are really the practical problems of everyday life of a common Indian, or are they only intellectual. A careful study of sex problems and their solutions in Mishra's plays leads us to the conclusion that they are certainly not the problems of the common man of India (especially of fifteen or twenty years ago). At the most they are the problems of those few highly educated young men and women of India, in whose life intellect and thought works more than in a common man's life and who have been deeply influenced by Western ways of life. These problems are a little ahead of time (for the years when these plays were written) for our country, and it seems that as Mishra has been deeply influenced by Western thought (as is clear from his prefaces to these plays) he has discussed these problems not after being instigated by their frequent occurrence in every day life, but he received these problems from the realistic literature of the West. The idea of these problems he borrowed from the West, and then he reflected them in the lives of the selected few of his own country in these plays.

In these problem plays, Mishra is a dramatic satirist who claims to draw a faithful picture of contemporary life. A careful analysis of his plays shows that he does not depict life as it is, nor as it ought to be; he is, therefore, neither a naturalist nor an idealist, yet he has affinities with both of them.[1] He observes the world of actuality like the naturalists, and dreams of a better world like the idealist. And inspite of his professed intellectualism he essentially continues the idealistic reaction against Western materialism, and the idealism of the East has a great fascination for him.[2]

1. Dr. Inder Nath Madan Modern Hindi Literature page 119. 2. Ibid pages 115-116.

In his enthusiasm for realism, Mishra has avoided frequent use of asides and soliloquies, and of poetical and rhetorical speeches. He has achieved good success in his psycho-analytical style; he has conducted his conversation often in simple, broken sentences in order to make it natural and realistic. He has entirely banished songs from his plays. On several occasions, he has included full sentences of English in his plays which are obviously unintelligible to a reader or spectator who does not know English. In some of his plays (e.g. 'Sanyasi') the scenes change so swiftly and the entrances and exits are so many that a confusion is created on the stage. In his 'Adhi Rat' the author has introduced supernatural element which does not look nice in a realistic drama.

'Duvidha' (1938) of Prithvi Nath Sharma also deals with the problem of sex. The problem of this play is the 'duvidna' (double-mindedness) of Sudha, a highly educated girl of today. She has finished her education and now the question that confronts her is that of marriage. While she has relished the joys of an independent life, she knows that married life brings slavery and restrictions for woman. She falls in love with Keshav, but she is not definite whether Keshav's love is sincere or otherwise. Keshav has already got a wife and a child, but this fact he hides from Sudha. In the end his wife Mohini discloses this fact to Sudha and relieves her of the suspense of her mind.

In 'Aparadhi' (1939) Sharma wants to show that a man is not always guilty by his nature. It is often his circumstances that make a man guilty, although he may be perfectly clean in his conscience. Ashok Kumar, a sentimental youth lets go a thief with these very feelings and is prepared to suffer himself in place of the actual thief. The magistrate is sure of Ashok's innocence (Act I Scene 4), but the evidences against him are so strong that he cannot be acquitted. In the end the situation is saved when the actual thief presents himself in the court and Ashok Kumar is absolved of his guilt. The author has sweetened this dry theme by introducing the love-plot of Lila. In this play there are two chief male characters — Ashok and Mata Din (the thief) — and both of them are sentimental. The sentiments of both

these young men are instigated by women — of Ashok by Lila, and of Mata Din by the Ayah. There are three female characters in the play—Lila, Renu and Ayah. Lila is a simple-minded girl, attracted by the virtues of Ashok; Renu is a self-controlled and sacrificing girl, while the Ayah is moved by Ashok Kumar's innocence.

In 'Sadh' (1944) again Prithvi Nath Sharma deals with the problem of marriage & sex. This play is much maturer to the two earlier plays of Sharma. While, as in the other two plays, the play-wright has achieved good success in plot-construction, here he is comparatively more successful also in developing the characters of the leading persons. Kumud, the heroine of the play is completely Westernised as appears from her make-up and mode of life in the first act; she believes in free love (स्वच्छन्द प्रेम) and therefore looks upon marriage as a बन्धन —

कुमुद — (आधे क्षण के लिये एकटक अजीत की ओर देखती हुई) — अजीत मैं तुम्हें चाहती हूं, बहुत चाहती हूं, यह न छिपाऊंगी; किन्तु मैं अपनी स्वच्छन्दता तुम्हारे लिये भी निछावर कर सकूंगी, इसका मुझे विश्वास नहीं। (Act I Scene I)

Not only does she hate the idea of marriage for this reason, what she dislikes and dreads more is the idea of giving birth to children —

कुमुद — इसके बाद तुम्हारे हृदय में अनन्त वर्षों से छिपी हुई अपने प्रतिरूप की, अपने उत्तराधिकारी की लालसा जागृत होगी। फिर उस लालसा को पूरा करने के लिये मुझे धड़ाधड़ बच्चे पैदा करने होंगे। (ज़रा कांपकर) न, मुझसे इस जंजाल में न फंसा जायेगा। (Act I Scene I)

A serious struggle goes on in her mind as to whether she should marry or not; sometimes she gives serious thought to the words of her friend Mridula, who warns her that she will never be happy with Ajit; again she ponders over her mother's advice according to which she would not get a better match than Ajit (Act I Scene 2). The playwright has depicted this conflict in Kumud's mind in a nice way. But the struggle in her mine gets more serious and intense when after marrying Ajit, she has to fight her natural instinct of becoming a mother. The influence of Westernism and her own love of free life lead her to hatred of producing children; but the eternal affection and desire of becoming a mother forces her to give up her obstinate attitude. This conflict of hers is not only with her husband Ajit, but even her own mind is divided over this issue. In Act III Scene I and Scene 2 the

playwright has very skilfully depicted this conflict in Kumud's mind. The single incident of Mohan's coming into her life, shakes off her hatred of children; as a result of the company of this child, Kumud gradually develops a strong feeling of affection for children, and in the end when Kumud talks this matter over with her mother, this instinct completely overpowers her —

कुमुद – कल अस्पताल चला गया है। उसकी मां और बुआ की यही इच्छा थी। वे उनकी अपनी जो ठहरीं! (गला रुंध जाता है)........

रामेश्वरी – वैसा क्या? तुमने मोहन के सिवाय कोई बालक देखा ही कब है? ...... जिन बच्चों का लालनपालन ठीक ढंग से हुआ करता है, उनमें वही दिल लुभाने वाला जादू होता है जो मोहन में है। जो कुछ तुम्हें मोहन में दीखा है, उससे भी अधिक तुम्हें अपने बच्चे में दीखेगा।

कुमुद – (ज़रा चौंककर) – अपना बच्चा! मेरा बच्चा? (लज्जा से मुंह लाल हो जाता है)

रामेश्वरी – हां, तुम्हारा बच्चा। कुमुद, विश्वास मानो, इस असार मायामय संसार में बच्चे ही यथार्थ हैं; सत्य और सुन्दर हैं। इस लिये बेटी, इस झूठी चमकवाली सभ्यता के मोह में फंस कर बच्चों से विमुख न हो। (Act III scene 2)

These words of her mother keep ringing in her ears; and even when she goes to the cinema-hall to see a picture (Act III Scene 3) she is all the time lost in thoughts about her own offspring; and when she returns home she informs Ajit (her husband) that she has made up her mind not to hate the idea of producing children any longer.

The character of Ajit has been devoted less time by the playwright; but his part is very significant in the play. It is he who transforms Kumud slowly and slowly from a thoroughly Westernised girl to a completely Indian house-wife. He is a simple, serious man who remains calm and unagitated in all conditions; Kumud sums up his character as follows —

कुमुद – झगड़ा? वे झगड़ा करना सीखे कहां? हां, मैंने कई बार उनके साथ ज़रूरत से ज़्यादा छेड़छाड़ की, किन्तु उनकी शान्ति न भंग कर सकी। कभी उनकी बालकों सी सरलता ने मेरे अस्त्रों को बेकार कर दिया और कभी उनके नेत्रों की सागर-जैसी गहराई से मैं परास्त हो गई। (Act II scene I)

Ajit is thoroughly Indian in behaviour and outlook; his thoughts on Western civilization have been expressed by him in the following —

अजीत – ...... बात यह है कि पाश्चिमी सांचे में ढलकर हमारा जीवन अस्वाभाविक हो गया है, जिस के कारण उस पर नीरसता और अशान्ति छाई रहती है। उसी नीरसता और अशान्ति से उन्मुक्त होने के लिये हम उत्तेजना की राह टटोलते हैं। ब्रिज की मेज़ पर, घुड़दौड़ के मैदान में, जगमगाते नाचघर में इसी उत्तेजना की तलाश में हम सब भटका करते हैं, परन्तु इससे मन कुछ भी नहीं पाता। उत्तेजना की प्यास उल्टी और भी भड़क उठती है। (Act I Scene 1)

'Kamala' of Uday Shankar Bhatta again centres round the question of sex. Dev Narayan, the chief character of the play, is a suspicious and sullen old man who boks upon woman as an object of man's enjoyment only. With this object in view he marries an educated young-girl Kamala, and there begins the conflict between man's pride and his desire to keep the woman down, and modern woman's strong impulse to assume independence. The playwright has been successful in the characterisation of Dev Narayan and Kamala, but the latter does not possess that much force which we find in the modernised girls of Mishra's plays or those of 'Sadh' by Prithvi Nath Sharma.

'Prem Ki Vedi' (1933) of Munshi Prem Chand takes up the question of marriage. Jenny, a Christian girl, wants to marry Yog Raj, a Hindu; but their religion stands in their way. A conflict goes on in Jenny's mind between her own sincere love and orthodox religious conventions. In fact the author wants a raise a cry of revolt against the orthodox and narrow conception of religion and in Jenny's words he has very boldly expressed his thoughts on religion —

जेनी — ..... लोगों ने तरह २ के मत बनाकर कितना द्वेष फैलाया है। क्या धर्म इसी लिये आया है कि आदमियों की अलग २ टोलियां बनाकर उनमें भेद भाव भर दे? ऐसा धर्म लुटेरों का हो सकता है, स्वार्थियों का हो सकता है, मूर्खों का हो सकता है। ईश्वर का नहीं हो सकता। etc. (Scene VII)

In the end the author has shown the victory of true love over religion, when Jenny says —

जेनी — ... अब मुझे कोई शंका नहीं, कोई बाधा नहीं। आज मैं इन सारे ढकोसलों को, इन सारे बनावटी बन्धनों को, प्रेम की वेदी पर अर्पण करती हूं। यही ईश्वर का धर्म है। ... खुदा का धर्म प्रेम है और मैं इसी धर्म को स्वीकार करती हूं। ... मेरे लिये हवन-कुंड और आल्टर में कोई अन्तर नहीं रहा। मुझे शक्ति दो ईश्वर! कि आजीवन इस व्रत को निभा सकूं। etc. (Scene VII)

From the point of view of characterisation, development of the plot and art this play does not rise above mediocrity.

In 'Chhaya' Premi deals with a different problem. The central figure in this play is a writer, who, although a genius, has to live on the mercy of the hard-hearted and exploiting publishers. Prakash, the hero of the play, is a great poet, but while he gives joy to the world with his poems, his own life is plunged in deep darkness. In a pathetic way he says —

"संसार को प्रकाश के गीत चाहिएं, प्रकाश नहीं चाहिए। लोग कहते हैं तुम्हारी कविता साहित्य की अमूल्य संपत्ति है, किन्तु कोई यह नहीं देखता कि विश्व-साहित्य को अमूल्य सम्पत्ति देने वाला

कवि अपनी पत्नी की इज़्ज़त ढकने के लिये एक धोती खरीदने में भी समर्थ नहीं, अपनी बच्ची को दूध पिलाने को भी दाम नहीं पाता। उस दिन जब साहित्य-सभा के मन्त्री मुझे मान-पत्र दे रहे थे, सभा के बाहर कचहरी का प्यादा समन लिये खड़ा था। इस तरह कब तक अपना लहू पीकर मैं साहित्य का संसार भर सकूंगा।"

The poet strongly criticises the capitalist mentality of the publishers, who exploit the writers for their personal benefit. But the problem which Premi has touched in this play is not of Prakash or Premi alone; it is the burning problem of almost every writer who feels exploited by his publisher. But Premi has not offered or suggest -ed any solution of this burning problem.

The hero of the play, namely Prakash, is a very sentimental youth who judges everything in a sentimental mood, and his sufferings are to a certain extent due to this weakness of his character. As the play bears personal reflections of Premi's life, the speeches of the hero are very poignant and sharp. The playwright has greatly succeeded in plot-construction and characterisation. But frequent entrances and exits, and quick transfer of scenes in certain cases will displease the audience when the play is performed on the stage.

Now we turn to those plays which deal with social, political or pseudo-political problems. Seth Govind Das is the foremost play-wight of this category. He has written a large number of problem plays including 'Sewa-Path', 'Tyag Ya Grahan', 'Santosh Kahan', 'Mahatv Kise' 'Pakistan', 'Garibi Aur Amiri' etc. These plays deal with social and political problems of yesterday and today, and in all these plays we notice a profound influence of Gandhiji's philosophy on author's mind (as we shall show in the following pages). The practical idealism, which Seth has presented in his plays with a firm determination, is an outcome of his reactions of family life and environments. He belongs to a very rich family from which he inherited two things in legacy: firstly his great wealth and a life of luxury, and secondly an orthodox viewpoint. But we generally find that an awakened and advanced mind soon develops a spirit of revolt against the influence of family traditions, and gets fed up with a life of monotony even in luxury and wealth. Seth's enlightened and awakened mind also revolted against the

legacy of his family; the reaction against a life of vast wealth manifested itself in simple living and the reaction against luxury turned into his love of the country and his sufferings for that cause. His intellectualism and free thinking replaced the orthodox viewpoint of his family. The combination of all these elements produced in him a practical idealism, which has been deeply influenced by the practical side of Gandhiji's philosophy, and the same we find reflected in his problem plays.

Seth's 'Siddhant-Swatantrya' (1938; सिद्धान्त-स्वातन्त्र्य), which was written in jail, has only two acts, not further sub-divided into scenes. The play greatly violates the unity of time, as the events of the first act took place in 1905, while the second act pertains to the year 1930. There are three leading characters in the play — Chaturbhuj Das, his son Tribhuwan Das and grandson Manohar Das. There is not much of action in the play, so the question of plot-construction does not arise. In characterisation Seth has delineated Chaturbhuj Das — a very rich Zamindar — as a highly affectionate father and grandfather, whose only principle is to see his son and grandson happy and prosperous, as he says in Act I—

चतुर्भुजदास – मेरे तो कोई सिद्धान्त ही नहीं। मेरे सिद्धान्त तो तुम हो। तुम सुखी रहो, तुम आराम से रहो, तुम पर कभी कोई किसी तरह की भी आफ़त न आने पावे, यही मेरे सिद्धान्त हैं।

His son Tribhuwan Das who is a young man in the first act, is very sentimental; he firmly believes in independence of thought, for which he slights his father in the first act and disregards his son in the second. The path that he followed in his youth and to which his old father strongly objected at that time, he gave up in his middle age. But the same path of independent thinking and service of the country is now adopted by his son Manohar (Act II) who is as fiery and sentimental as his father in his young days was. In this play the author has strongly expressed his own views and feelings at several places, as for example in the following speech —

त्रिभुवन० – किंतु मैं अकर्मण्य सुख का जीवन बिता कर केवल खा-पी और चैन उड़ाकर शूकर के समान मोटा नहीं होना चाहता। मैं संसार में कुछ करके कुछ होना चाहता हूं। मैं अपने देश की सेवा करूंगा और पराधीनता की ज़ंजीरों से अपनी मातृ-भूमि को स्वतन्त्र बनाऊंगा। (Act I)

In 'Seva-Path' (1943) Seth Govind Das has dealt with the difficult 'path of service'. There are three leading male characters in the play. The hero, Dina Nath, is a poor young man who is a firm follower of Gandhiji's doctrine of service and sacrifice. Shakti Pal belongs to the upper middle class; he stands for socialism and means to serve the country by working honestly without bidding farewell to his wealth and power. Shri Niwas is a member of the aristocratic class. He represents the capitalist mentality, but he is also an epicure, who does not worry his head with any problem of his country or the world. There is little of action in this play also, and the playwright means to bring these three different creeds into conflict in which Gandhism comes out victorious. To this drama of dry discussion on different doctrines, Seth has added a bit of interest and charm in the person of Margaret, the European wife of Shakti Pal; and in her character the author has reflected the fickleness, faithlessness and materialistic viewpoint of the West. This play was successfully staged on 14th February 1947 at Khanna (East Punjab) under the direction of the writer of this thesis.

'Tyag Ya Grahan' (1943) is another beautiful social drama, in which Seth has drawn a contrast between Gandhism and Communism. Dharm Dhwaj represents Gandhian principles, while Niti Raj stands for Communism; the former believes in 'Tyag' (or sacrifice) while the latter conforms to the policy of 'Grahan' (selfishness); and in the end the Gandhian principle of 'Tyag' (sacrifice) achieves victory over the contrary principle of selfish 'Grahan'. Vimala, the heroine of the play, is an educated young girl who has some leanings towards Communism. For a moment she feels attracted towards both Dharm Dhwaj and Niti Raj; but soonafter Niti Raj wins her over to his side, and in accordance with Communist principles she agrees to lead with him the social as well as sexual life without binding themselves in bonds of marriage. The orthodox Hindu society gets wrathful at their open illicit and sinful connection, but Dharm Dhwaj is the only person who supports their actions. In his view Niti Raj and Vimala are true Communists, who unflinchingly march on their path of communist principles, not only in theory but also in practice.

But while Vimala agreed to this connection strictly due to her faith in Communist principles, Niti Raj was prompted more by her youth and beauty than his own principles; while she is prepared to face all scandal and opposition, he is too weak for that job. Consequently, when Vimala gets 'en ciente' as a result of their connubial relations, she is disillusioned by the changed attitude of Niti Raj. He shudders at the idea of her conception, while she sees nothing wrong in it. When Niti Raj requests her for abortion, she gets enraged and curses him for his principle of 'Grahan' (selfishness) and goes to Dharm Dhwaj for guidance. Here the character of Dharm Dhwaj has been idealized; he saves her from an angry mob after sustaining injuries himself and when Vimala relates the whole story of her connections with and recent disconnection from Niti Raj, he steps forward for her help and marries her, totally regardless of the fact that she was already pregnant.

The playwright has thrown sufficient light on the character of Rama Kant also, whom he has depicted as an affectionate, kind-hearted man, but firm in his principles. While the author has idealised Gandhism, he has also shown to the Indian youth, who are sometimes swayed by Communist sentiments, the natural consequences of following Communist principles in practice.

In 'Santosh Kahan' (1945) Seth deals with another common problem of every man's life, i.e. the problem of contentment. Man is never contented; when he is in one position he longs for another, and when he gets that too, he begins to long for yet another. This very is the problem of Manasa Ram, the hero of the play. In the beginning (Act I) he is a very poor man, a school teacher, very fond of reading and writing. In the second act he appears in a splendid bungalow; he is now a very rich man, has received the title of knight-hood, but even this life of luxury and great honour fails to give contentment to his heart. In the third act we meet him in the guise of a Congress-man, clad in khadi from top to toe and living in an Ashram; but here too he is not contented. In Act IV he comes before us as a Minister. but still discontented. He gives up that mode of life also after sometime and now tries to find contentment in simplicity and open-

air living, in art and music, in opening schools and hospitals in the countryside; in other words he finds contentment in a life of constructive work as preached by Gandhiji. In the end the playwright sounds the central note of the play in the following words —

मनसाराम — सन्तोष का मार्ग खोजते रहना चाहिए और सच्चा सन्तोष कदाचित असन्तोष में ही है।

There are only four characters in this play; but it is only Manasa Ram, the hero who carries on the plot with him. Niti Vrat and Rama have been added just to carry on conversation with Manasa Ram, and Manohar plays no part in the drama. In fact 'Santosh Kahan' is a monodrama in five acts, where only Manasa Ram goes on explaining his viewpoint, while other characters are there mostly to say 'Yes' or 'No' to his arguments.

Far better than the above drama is Seth's 'Pakistan(1946). It is a political drama in three acts in which the distinguished playwright has dealt with the notorious problem of Pakistan. Written before the actual establishment of Pakistan, the play is entirely the result of author's imagination, and contains all hypothetical facts. The author presumes that inspite of the patriotic efforts of the well-wishers of the motherland, India is divided and Pakistan is established. But even after this the old problems of everyday displeasure and especially the minority problem— which was the cause of trouble in united India, and for the solution of which the establishment of Pakistan was sought — remains still unsolved. Discontent and displeasure still prevail among the respective minorities of both the dominions, which rose from the partition of united India.

The patriotic playwright in fact wrote this play with a view to discouraging the demand for Pakistan; he has tried to bring home to the protagonists of that demand the defects of their theory and the evil. consequences of partition. In a way he has admonished them to give up their unpatriotic demand, as it won't satisfy them or redress their genuine grievances. But the gifted but noble and patriotic playwright did not know that the poison of communalism distilled in the minds of Muslims masses by Muslim League propaganda was too strong and deep, and that it would ultimately lead to the actual partition of the country and the establishment of Pakistan.

The plot is very interesting and well-constructed, and there is ample action in this play. The author has nicely portrayed the characters of Shanti Priya and Jahan Ara, and has described in detail the struggle that goes on in their mind between conflicting emotions. Both of them are above all communalism and look upon the two nation as brothers and friends. For a short while Jahan Ara, under the influence of her Muslim League advisers, gives way to communal feelings and she also stands up for the cause of Pakistan. But her human side remains still alive and strong. She agrees to become a member of the Pakistan cabinet with a view to improving the lot of her community and promoting friendly relations with the Dominion of India. But when she studies the bigoted and unreasonable attitude of her Prime Minister (of Pakistan) and finds his principles based on fraud and falsehood, she at once resigns from the cabinet, goes back to Delhi and is once again joined with her old friend Shanti Priya. Both of them were, and are again, free from communal bias and they now start striving for the reunion of both the dominions.

Ample light has been thrown also on the characters of Amar Nath and Mahfuz Khan, both of whom strive hard for bringing about a compromise between the two communities. On the other hand Pir Bux and Durga are strongly communalist in outlook, and while Pir Bux is wedded to the cause of Pakistan, Durga is sworn to a strong Hindu government in united India.

The introduction of Ganga Ram (the parrot of Jahan Ara) and Ruby (the bitch of Shanti Priya) shows the ingenuity of author 's imagination. These two characters (i.e. Ganga Ram and Ruby) give several opportunities to their respective masters of giving vent to their innermost feelings, and of disclosing the occasional ups and down in their mind. But for these two characters, the play would have abounded in soliloquies which would have been essential for the faithful portrayal of the conflicting emotions of the minds of Jahan Ara and Shanti Priya.

Equally interesting is the next drama of Seth, viz. 'Mahatva Kise' (महत्व किसे? 1947). This play is a debate on the problem as to whether greatness lies in Wealth or Poverty. The debate goes on at

great length between Karam Chand, the hero of the play, and his wife Satya Bhama. Satya Bhama, who is a practical woman, is firm in her belief that man has no value without money; he is nowhere respected and even his life can run on successfully only with the help of money. On the other hand Karam Chand, who is an ideal Gandhi-ite is adamant in his view that sooner or later दरिद्रनारायण (Poverty) will be respect -ed and it will rule. The wife has plenty of worldly sense; she is a woman of the world who attaches due importance to everything. Her husband, on the otherhand, lives in a world of ideal sentiments, and he is ideal in his feelings as well as practice. Satya Bhama nicely brings out the difference between their respective viewpoints —

सत्यभामा — आप स्वप्न के स्वर्ग में रहने वाले देवता हो सकते हैं, लेकिन मैं तो इसी मृत्युलोक में रहने वाली मानवी हूं। और मेरा तो यही-मत है कि स्वप्न के लिये जीवन की बाज़ी लगाना कोई बुद्धिमानी नहीं। आप पार्थिवता से सूक्ष्मता, मस्तिष्क से हृदय, शरीर से आत्मा के अधिक निकट हैं, परन्तु यह न भूलिये कि हम पार्थिव संसार में निवास करते हैं। etc.

(The closing speech of the play)

The main theme of the play has been repeated thrice by the playwright in the following words of the husband and the wife —

सत्यभामा — .... देखना है कि आगे आने वाले ज़माने में भी संपन्नता और दरिद्रता में ....
(कुछ सोचते हुए) संपन्नता और दरिद्रता में ..... (चुप हो जाती है)
कर्मचन्द — (सत्यभामा की ओर देखते हुए) हां, संपन्नता और दरिद्रता में .... ?
सत्य० — है महत्व किसे ? (दोनों एक दूसरे की तरफ़ देखते हैं)
(Page 22, 44, 74)

In order to emphasize the theme the author has introduced the above conversation thrice in exactly the same words, so that it begins to lose its dramatic effect and charm, instead of enhancing it. The play ends in indecision as was quite natural; Seth does not believe that greatness lies in wealth, nor can he rightly prove from the practical world that it lies in Poverty; so he has wisely ended the play in indecision.

Seth's best problem play is perhaps his 'Garibi Aur Amiri' (1947) अथवा 'श्रम या उत्तराधिकार', for which a prize of Rs 1200/- was awarded to him by the Hindustani Academy, Allahabad. The problem of this play is again the same as that of the previous drama; there is a continuous struggle between wealth and poverty, and each of these two wins on different occasions, although in the end victory goes to the life of poverty with courage and virtue.

The plot is very interesting and well-constructed and the author has nicely portrayed the characters of Vidya Bhushan, Achala and Lakshmi Das. While the characters in most of Seth's other problem plays are mere types (e.g. in 'Tyag Ya Grahan', 'Seva-Path' etc.) here all these three characters have marked individuality too. In addition to representing certain creeds and ideals, they are essentially men and women of the world, with usual powers and failings, ambitions and affections. Thus we find that Lakshmi Das is a multimillionaire who has earned his fortune by sucking the blood of the poor labourers; but he is not only a capitalist; he is, at the same time a very affectionate and soft-hearted father. He is stone-hearted for the world, but for his beloved daughter he has a heart even softer than flower —

लक्ष्मीदास - ..... मुझे शायद सारे संसार का खून देखकर चक्कर न आयेगा, उसकी नदियां देखकर भी नहीं, पर बेटा, तेरे आंसुओं की दो बूंदें, हां, दो बूंदें मेरे पैर कंपाने के लिये, अरे! मुझे बहा तक देने के लिये काफ़ी हैं।

(Act I Scene 2)

Vidya Bhushan is a poor strong-writer, who has received education with the help of a scholarship. But although he could carry on his studies only with the help of another's wealth, yet he hates wealth because it means the exploitation of the poor in his opinion. He and Achala, the daughter of the multi-millionaire Lakshmi Das, are deeply in love; but he is not ready to marry her unless she bids good-bye to her father and all his wealth. While Achala is prepared to part with her rich heredity, she refuses to leave her father who is so kind and affectionate to this motherless girl. Vidya Bhushan leaves her, but has weakness for her still lurking in his heart. At last Achala accepts his conditions and marries him. Her affectionate father tries to bring Bhushan round, but the sentimental youth is too restive to yield. Achala, who has led a princely life so far soon gets disgusted with the life of poverty; now she begins to look upon the sacrifice that she undertook for the sake of her lover as a momentary fit of misleading emotions. In a sharp exchange of words with Vidya Bhushan (Act III) she lays bare the innermost feelings of her heart, and displeased with the life of dire poverty which entails all hardships and sufferings, she leaves her husband and goes back to her father.

In her father's home she feels slighted as her father now concentrated all his affection on her (Achala's) son and not on her. She returns to India and begins to lead a life of poverty and hardship away from her husband, in order to make herself fit for the ideals of her husband. She succeeds in her effort, and while she is packing for journey to her husband, the latter suddenly reaches her house (Act V scene 3). Now when Achala has firmly followed the ideal path previously pointed out to her by her husband, the latter shows a weakness in his character; he changes his creed as his bitter experience of the world has taught him that wealth is essential for a successful leading of life. But before Vidya Bhushan and Achala can have any discussion on his changed attitude, he suddenly passes away due to heart failure. The unexpected arrival of Vidya Bhushan in the end and his sudden death have become a little unnatural and melodramatic.

Achala's character also affords an interesting study. She is a very sentimental girl; in the beginning she is torn between her love for her father and for Bhushan. In a fit of emotion she surrenders before Bhushan, accepts his conditions, but when she actually tries to live upto Bhushan's ideals, she fails. A slight rebuff at her father's house is too unbearable for her, so that she again leaves her father and again decides to mould herself to Bhushan's ideals; and this time she succeeds. But in Achala's absence Bhushan's firmness in his ideals is greatly shaken and he changes his creed altogether. In fact Achala was his source of inspiration; she was the cause of his success, and her absence proved to be the cause of his failure.

In a lengthy introduction the playwright has referred to the sources of this play, and has added some notes on his latest experiments in dramatic technique; while he has not introduced a single song in his earlier problem plays, in the introduction to this play he has justified his use of soliloquies and songs in this play. Seth has also inserted Sanskrit Shlokas here and there in this play and has occasionally made allusions to Hindu mythology and past history.

In all his plays Seth Govind Das has followed a descriptive and not a suggestive style. He is straightforward and frank, and

what he means to say he expresses in clear terms. In conversation his chief characters (e.g. Dina Nath, Dharm Dhwaj) put their respective viewpoint in a very friendly yet forceful manner, in a mood of taking their words and arguments to the heart of the other man. They are neither ironical in their remarks, nor try to pick up quarrel with their antagonist in view, in course of discussion. And it appears that Seth's own character and his experiences in the political life have given this tendency to his style.

Further we find that the atmosphere of Seth's problem plays is that of aristocracy and his problems pertain generally to the life of the rich and big people; in his plays we meet millionaires and multimillionaires (e.g. Lakshmi Das, Manasa Ram, Karam Chand), ministers and big people (Shakli Pal, Manasa Ram) with their life of extravagance and arrogance, their greed for honour and fame in public life.

In most of his plays there is very little of action (e.g. 'Seva-Path', 'सिद्धान्तस्वातन्त्र्य', 'संतोषकहां'); we find discussion going on between different characters on their respective viewpoints. This abundance of bare argumentation and discussion on different doctrines or creeds (e.g. Gandhism, Socialism, Communism, Selfishness or Sacrifice etc.) runs a great risk of boring out an ordinary audience, which can take more interest in events and actions in a drama than mere exchange of words. Of course, for a political-minded audience, interested in one creed or the other, these plays can have good charm and effect. It seems that Seth also realised this lack of action in his earlier plays and we find that in his later attempts (e.g. 'Pakistan', 'Garibi Aur Amiri' etc.) there is sufficient action in addition to discussion on different doctrines.

Seth has made his dialogues very simple; they are not very literary or rhetorical. In his later plays, especially in 'Garibi Aur Amiri' he has intentionally introduced soliloquies, even very long soliloquies[1], which are often boring, although Seth looks upon them as very dramatic and impressive; only a very skilful and

1. E.g. Achala's opening soliloquy in Act I scene 2; in Act I scene 3; in Act II scene I; in Act III scene I; Act III scene 3; etc.
Vidya Bhushan's long soliloquy in Act II scene 2; Act III scene 2 etc.

and experienced actor can make these soliloquies interesting and dramatic. Again, these soliloquies have been couched in so broken sentences that, realistic though they are, these long broken sentences after jar on the ears. Seth has made use of simple Hindustani for his important characters in all the plays. On certain occasions he has also inserted English phrases and sentences, in order to represent the talk of educated or aristocratic people as faithfully as possible (e.g. Shaktipal, Shri Niwas). He has also used different dialects for peoples of different provinces as we find in Seva Path (Act II Scene 4; Scene 2); he has put local dialects in the mouth of servants and attendants as in 'Tyag Ya Grahan' and 'Sidhant-Swatantrya'.

'Swarg Ki Jhalak' (1939) of Upendra Nath Ashk is a social satire which is based on the problem of female education. In this drama the author wants to emphasize that while an absolutely illiterate and uncultured woman is unfit for making the family life very happy, the highly educated and Westernised woman of today is equally a failure in this respect. The author is not against female education but he means to criticise Western ways of life of our modern educated Indian girls as he says — "नाटक का उद्देश्य शिक्षा अथवा आधुनिक नारी के विरुद्ध न होकर, उस मनोवृत्ति के विरुद्ध होना है, जो हमारे यहां की अधिक शिक्षित लड़कियों में पैदा होती जा रही है कि वे अपना बाहर संवारने के जोश में घर बिगाड़ती जाती हैं।....आज प्रत्येक शिक्षित लड़की के लिये शिक्षित, पूर्ण रूप से आधुनिक, साथ ही धनी पति का मिलना कठिन है, इस लिये यदि उसे विवाह करके normal (सादा) जीवन बिताना है तो उसे उस जीवन पर नाक-भौं न चढ़ाना चाहिए।"(1)

The playwright wants to emphasize —

"जहां शिक्षा पाकर नारी स्वाभिमान, आत्म-विश्वास, व्यापक ज्ञान, तथा समाज-सेवा की भावनायें पाये, वहां उसे अपना मानसिक सन्तुलन भी कायम रखना चाहिए। तभी समाज में व्यवस्था कायम रह सकेगी।"(2)

In this play the author discloses that what a modern youngman looks upon as heaven is nothing more than a mere illusion of his mind. Raghu, the hero of the play, refuses to marry a moderately educated girl because he thinks that a highly-educated wife can make his life heavenly. But when he looks at the modern highly-educated girl and

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1. Introduction to the play. 2. Ibid.

his behaviour from a closer distance, he is disillusioned; his friends Mr. Ashok and Prof. Rajendra have got highly-educated wives, and Raghu thought their lives to be full of heavenly joy (as it appeared outwardly); but when he sees their real life from within and finds what a hell it is, he atonce gives up the idea of a highly educated match, rejects a first class graduate artist girl and agrees to marry the moderately educated girl.

The plot has been well-constructed, but in characterisation the author has succeeded in giving an individual touch only to Prof. Rajendra. Most of the other characters are mere types; Mrs. Rajendra, Mrs. Ashok and Uma are typical modern educated girls, while Mr. Ashok is a typical hen-pecked husband. The characters of Bhai Sahib and Raghu have also become types, more or less. 'Bhai Sahib' represents the elderly orthodox class while Raghu represents the modern youth who are enamoured of the modern educated girls merely for their outer glamour. Occasionally, in the characters of 'Bhai Sahib' (Act IV Scene 3) and Prof. Rajendra, (Act III) the author has tried to play the role of a reformer. The language of the play is simple, and the play is nice for stage performance. It was staged with great success in Kali Bari Hall, Simla on 10th August 1949 under the direction of the writer of this thesis. The show was inaugurated by Hon'ble S. Narottam Singh, the then Education Minister of East Punjab and was much liked by the gentry.

'Dhire Dhire' (धीरे धीरे 1939) of Vrindavan Lal Varma is a political satire; its theme is based on contemporary politics of the country. In a satirical way the playwright refers to the policy of धीरे धीरे (slow and steady) of the Congress government, when the Congress accepted ministeries in various provinces shortly before the second great war. The Congress government had to face several difficulties and to solve numerous problems of the country; but instead of taking quick strides towards various problems, the government adhered to the policy of proceeding slowly until its short period of government was over.

In dealing with this theme the author has kept up his mental balance and has not shown bitterness in his irony; while he has not

his behaviour from a [illegible] [illegible], he is [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Mr. Ashok and Prof. Rajendra [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and Raghu [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to be [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] what a [illegible] it is, he [illegible] giving up the idea of a [illegible] educated match, [illegible] a [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] girl [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible] the moderately educated girl.

The plot has been well-[illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and author has succeeded in giving [illegible] [illegible] only to [illegible] [illegible]. Most of the other characters are [illegible] [illegible]. Rajendra, [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] are typical modern educated [illegible], while Mr. Ashok [illegible] typical [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. The [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible]. [illegible] [illegible] represents the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] while [illegible] represents the modern youth who are [illegible] of the modern [illegible] girls [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and Prof. Rajendra, (Act [illegible]) the author has tried to play the role of a [illegible]. The language of the play is simple, and the play [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. It was staged with great [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] under the direction of [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible]. The [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] by [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible].

'[illegible] [illegible]' ([illegible] [illegible]) by [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] is based on [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of the Congress [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

supported this slow policy of the Congress government, at the same time, he has not sharply or bitterly criticised it. From artistic point of view the play does not possess much merit.

In 'Bandhan' Hari Krishna 'Premi' describes the struggle between capital and labour. Rai Bahadur Khazanchi Ram, a mill-owner represents the capitalist mentality, while Mohan is the leader and guide of the labourers. The interests of the capitalist and the labourers come into clash, and in the end victory goes to the labourers. The character of Mohan betrays strong influence of Gandhiji's creed of Satyagraph, non-violence and sacrifice. The play has plenty of external conflict, while it is mostly lacking in mental conflict, and we do not find deep psycho-analytical study even of the leading characters. Out of female characters, Sarala is very bold and firm; she is the source of inspiration and encouragement not only to her brother Mohan, but to labourers in general. To the theme of capital and labour, the amorous touch has been given by depicting Malati, the daughter of the capitalist mill-owner, in love with Mohan, the labourer leader; and the couple is married in the end.

In 'Angur Ki Beti' (1937) Pt. Govind Vallabh Pant emphasizes the evils of drinking. Although the theme is very old, still it has by no means died out today. As the problem is not very subtle, it does not leave much room for minute analysis and deep observation. Still the author has pointed out and emphasized the evil consequences of drinking in an effective manner, and has also told the way how to give up the evil habit of drinking. The play seems to have been written for the screen,[1] as appears from its technique.

'Jit Men Har' (जीत में हार 1942) of Chandra Shekhar Pande deals with another old theme, which has so often been dealt with by Munshi Prem Chand in his stories and novels, and in 'Netronmilan'[2] of Mishra brothers. The author refers to the theme of this play in the following words —

"मुकद्दमा लड़ने के कारण किस प्रकार दोनों पक्ष तबाह हो जाते हैं और वकील तथा निठल्लों का भला होता है, इसी बात का सजीव चित्रण इस नाटक में किया गया है। मुकद्दमा से केवल धन ही की हानि नहीं होती, वरन् झूठ, छल, कपट, ईर्ष्या, वैर इत्यादि दुर्गुण मन में घर कर लेते हैं।"[3] etc.

1. Dr. Som Nath Gupta: Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas: Page 250
2. See page 183 before.
3. See Introduction to the play.

The play is of ordinary merit, and has no outstanding feature to elicit special praise of the reader or the spectator; construction of the plot is of ordinary skill and characters are mostly types. Still the author has achieved appreciable success in producing a very realistic atmosphere of the country-side. He puts before our eyes a clear and true picture of village-life with all its evils, jealousies and neighbourly hostilities. Ram Dhani and Sukhayi, two neighbours, quarrel with each other over a very minor question of land, come to blows and then go to the court. They are two typical villagers who are possessed of false pride and each wants to defeat the other at the cost of his own ruin. The author wants to make clear to these village people that even their victory (जीत) is in fact their defeat (हार) if it makes them lose their all and leaves them no better than beggars. The character of Govind betrays an influence of Gandhiji's personality on author's mind.

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CHAPTER XXII

LYRICAL DRAMA

Broadly speaking, lyrical drama is a play written entirely in verse; but the use of verse alone is not sufficient to give any play the title of lyrical drama. The essential element of a lyrical drama , beside verse, is sentiment which must be profuse in it. As lyrical drama must abound in sentiment, action and external conflict is not plenty in it. On the other hand the conflict in lyrical drama is mainly internal, that is, between two or more conflicting emotions of one and the same mind. In this way mental strife which leads to a skilful depiction of emotion is the dominant feature of lyrical drama, and wherever external conflict is introduced in these plays, it is done mainly for the purpose of intensifying the internal conflict.

In Sanskrit drama verse occupies a prominent position; but there is not a single Sanskrit play known so far which is written entirely or exclusively in verse. The same is true of Hindi drama of the ninteenth century. In Bengali drama, Tagore's 'Chitra' and D.L.Roy's 'Sita' are good examples of this type. In English, the lyrical plays of Shelley, Browning and Swinburne are well-known. In Hindi literature Prasad's 'Karunalaya' (1912) seems to be the first drama of this type.

The main theme of 'Karunalaya' has been drawn by Prasad from 'Shunah-Shepa Akhyana' of the Aitrey-a Brahmana. The playwright has changed the latter part of the story either after his own imagination or perhaps under the influence of some other mythological source. Raja Harishchandra is enjoying a boat-journey when he is reminded, all of a sudden, of his promise to sacrifice his only son Rohit to god Varuna. The king agrees to carry out his word, but his youthful son refuses to be sacrificed. Having disobeyed his

father's words, he retires into a jungle.

In the forest he meets, by chance, the starving sage Ajigarta and his family. With the hunger-stricken sage he strikes a bargain and purchases his middle son 'Shunah-Shepa' for a hundred cows. Now Rohit returns to his father's court; the father reprimands him for his disobedience and threatens to disinherit him. But Rohit argues that he evaded death just for the good of his father; firstly, with his death who would have succeeded Harishchandra; and secondly he says —

पुत्र न रहता तो क्या होता कौन फिर
देता पिण्डतिलोदक यह भी समझिये।

Anyhow the preparations of sacrifice begin. The moment is very terrible and touching when the father (Ajigarta) agrees to butcher his son with his own hand for another hundred cows, while everyone had refused to slaughter him for the sacrifice. The tensity of the situation reaches a very high pitch here, but this sharpness and piquancy of situation is soon lost when sage Vishvamitra arrives there with Suvrata and discloses the real identity of Shunah-Shepa; he reveals that the victim is in fact their son and not of Ajigarta.

In this play, which is one of the earliest attempts of Prasad, the playwright has not very much succeeded in portraying a deep mental conflict. The plot provides the author with several occasions where he could have displayed his power of depicting the mental conflict of his characters. He could have described with great force the mind of Harishchandra when it is torn between duty and affection; he has weakness for his only son, and yet has profound regard for his word. In the same way the author depicts no conflict in the mind of Ajigarta when the latter agrees to sell off his son, and later on to slaughter him. And the revelation of the secret of Shunah-Shepa's parentage weakens the spirit of conflict all the more. Still, on a number of occasions the author has infused great emotions in his speeches (for instance in the utterances of starving Ajigarta) and has shown good command over language.

The next lyrical drama is 'Anagh' (1925) of Maithili Sharan Gupta. In this play the chief character is that of Magha (मघ)who

is a previous incarnation of Lord Buddha. He is an embodiment of noble qualities and is given to benevolent deeds; his character is a symbol of service and sacrifice as he himself sums up at one place-

जहां कुछ भी समाज का हित हो,
वहीं यह मेरा तनु अर्पित हो। (Page 24)

Magha upholds the cause of the untouchables, and thus incurs the displeasure and enmity of the high-born; but he is absolutely non-violent and bears all troubles peacefully; in the end his greatness and guiltlessness is accepted by all and thus his character is glorified.

A close study of the above qualities of Magha and his spirit of service and sacrifice, his zeal for अछूतोद्धार are sufficient to point out that the author is greatly influenced by the personality of Mahatma Gandhi in delineating Magha's character, and the entire conduct of Magha has been based on Gandhian model.

In this play the lyrical element is very poor; the psycho-analytical study of the characters is lacking; the conflict here is not internal or mental, but it is between external situations; even in the character of Surabhi we do not find any conflict between different emotions. Besides the use of verse, the author has introduced a number of songs on suitable occasions; e.g.

सुरभि - प्रेम करता है तो कर त्याग,
नहीं तो है वह कोरा राग।
प्रकट कर चित्त, न अपनी चाह,
भरम खो दे न मरम की आह।
सिंधु-सम सह तू अन्तर्दाह,
और रह धीर गंभीर अथाह।
बुझे तुझमें ही तेरी आग,
प्रेम करता है तो कर त्याग। etc. (Page 91).

Premi's 'Swarn-Vihan' also betrays a deep influence of contemporary thought; it deals with the principle of non-violence and describes its ultimate victory over violence. The author describes the political awakening of the country which, in its zeal and rashness, wants to resort to violent action. But the author preaches them the doctrine of Ahimsa in the following words —

नहीं नहीं ऐ पगले यौवन,
जीत प्रेम से पापाचार।
और पाप से पाप मिटाना
महाभूल है, व्यर्थ विचार।
. . . .
कहीं आग से आग बुझाना,
है संभव, ऐ युवक विचार।
सत्य धर्म जिस ओर रहेंगे,
उसी ओर होंगे करतार।

It seems as if Mahatma Gandhi is delivering a sermon of truth, affection and non-violence to the fiery youth of his country who want to resort to violence and stern action for the achievement of their aim.

Although the poet has given ample proof of his power of poetry, of presenting beautiful word-pictures and expressing delicate sentiments, yet the dramatic element is not very strong in this play; there is also a lack of tense situations and keen psycho--analysis in the principal characters; still 'Swarn-Vihan' is a some-what better attempt at lyrical drama than 'Anagha'.

But the prominent lyrical playwrights of this period are Uday Shankar Bhatta and Seth Govind Das. Bhatta has written three interesting lyrical dramas, viz. 'Matsyagandha', 'Vishvamitra' and 'Radha'. The principal character in 'Matsya-Gandha' is that of the fisherman's daughter who was known as Matsya Gandha before her marriage with king Shantanu, after which she received the name Satyavati. The youthful maiden gets impatient at the exhilarating touch of youth, which produced a thrill in her bosom. At the enchanting sight of lovely Nature her youthful passions begin to rise; but she soon realises that she is not free and independent like Nature —

दुखहीन, लक्ष्यहीन, स्वरहीन, लय-हीन
एक ही प्रमत्त माते, एक ही प्रमत्त गाते।
ऐसे ही तो मैं भी बही जा रही हूं, किन्तु मैं तो
नाविका हूं, केवट की बेटी, काम जिसका है
पार पहुंचाना। नहीं लहर सी मुक्त हूं मैं; etc.

(Scene I)

Just at that moment Ananga (Cupid) makes his appearance; he introduces himself to the emotional girl, who finds Cupid of the following manner — कैसे तुम सुन्दर, ज्यों मिश्रण हो शैशव का,
यौवन का, तारिका का, विधु का, विलास सब, etc

(Scene I)

Anang wishes to give her the boon of lasting youth; but the girl looks upon herself as too small and unworthy to receive such a high blessing. But when Anang disappears, the suppressed sentiments of maiden's mind get too strong and she feels a great change of emotions — घूमता सा देखती अलात चक्र ऐसा चित्त,
रह रह, कांपती हैं रोम-राजियां निखिल। (Scene I)

While a storm is still raging in her mind and paralysing her power of discrimination, the old sage Parashar is seen by her side asking for her boat. The young girl is afraid of the storm that is raging in the river as well as in her weak, emotional mind; her following words of objection have a double meaning — जीर्ण नाव, शीर्ण बल, अनिल प्रबल, as they point towards the boat as well as her own agitated mind.

When they reach the mid-stream, passion overpowers the young mind of old Parashar and he invites Matsyagandha for enjoyment; but the fisher-girl puts forward the following objection —

यह तो अनय प्रभो, कैसे मान लूं मैं यह,
हीन जाति तो भी है समाज का अनन्त भय।
कैसे यह आप ही बताइये, बताइये न? (Scene 3)

It is significant to note that the young girl objects to his invitation because she is afraid of society, and not because her own mind is opposed to that action. In these words the playwright points out the difficulty not only of Matsya-Gandha, but of woman in general. He means that a woman is not always mentally opposed to what she actually abstains from doing in her daily life. She is in fact afraid of society and its scandal; otherwise her free mind would have given quite a different shape to her deeds and actions.

Parashar answers her objections with force; he, with a passion-stricken mind, pleads that there is no Dharma, that 'there is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so.' What society looks upon as noble today may be turned into ignoble by circumstances the next day;

मानता है मानव जिसे ही धर्म-वस्तु आज
कल वही होती अविधेय नरलोक में। (Scene 3)

Matsya-gandha is fully conscious that woman is easily swayed by passion, but she is also aware of her delicate poition in society;

नारी के स्वरूप, सुख, शोभा में छिपे हैं देव,
संख्याहीन अभिशाप, संख्याहीन यातना।
वासना का वेग बहता है अति भीम वहां
कृच्छ्रदमनीय। वह प्रलोभन पुंज और
आकर्षण। नारी एक श्वेततम पट सम
जिस पै तनिक बिन्दुपात भी कलंक है। (Scene 3)

But when the sage explains to her the self-willed and independent working of different objects of Nature and says

देखो लघु सरिताएं चलतीं विधान लिये,
और वही पावस में बांध तोड़ डालतीं। (Scene 3)

the young girl accepts his argument; but before yielding to his sensuous desire she begs of him a boon of lasting youth and virginity. The sage tries to dissuade her saying प्रिय भी सदा न प्रियतम होता है, but when she insists on her demand, the sage atonce agrees to give her that boon, and at this she also atonce surrenders herself to his passion. The scene that follows is very significant and dramatic; the slow-rising passion of Matsya Gandha's mind suddenly reaches its climax, and as if as a result of this, darkness suddenly spreads all round and the following sounds shoot forth from that darkness —

(पहली आवाज़) — नाथ, वह कन्यकात्व ?
(दूसरी आवाज़) — वह भी कलंकहीन !
(पहली आवाज़) — माननीय होगा क्या ?
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
(पहली आवाज़) — नाथ, वही इष्ट मुझे।
(दूसरी आवाज़) — एवमस्तु, एवमस्तु —
(पहली आवाज़) — एवमस्तु, प्रियतम। (Scene 3)

In these words are resounding the arguments and emotions of Matsyagandha's mind, which she put before Parashar before self-surrender.

The fourth scene presents Matsyagandha before us just after her indulgence with Parashar; she now feels a wonderfully romantic change —

क्या हुआ हा, कैसा यह, याद पड़ता न कुछ
रोम रोम बहा नवचेतन अनन्त ओज,
और लगता है जैसे विश्व अभिनव ने ही
मद का उदधि भर डाला मानो देह में। (Scene 4)

In the fifth scene we meet Matsyagandha in the role of Satyavati, the wife of king Shantanu. In the sixth she stands before us as a widow, and her ever-lasting youth proves to her to be the source of great distress and despair. Here Anang (Cupid) appears again, as if to add insult to her injury, or to remind her of her foolish act. Now Satyavati begs of Anang to take back that youth from her, but Anang goes away, only after making this reply —

पियो कंठ तक पियो ओठ तक ढाल ढाल,
यौवन महान् है, अलभ्य है जगत में। (Scene 6)

And after this satirical remark of Anang, the play ends, leaving Matsyagandha sorrowing over her foolish longing for a lasting youth.

'Matsyagandha' is a very interesting lyrical drama in which the talented author has, in a very nice manner, described the conflict between the irrestible longing of a woman to remain ever green and youthful, and the obstacles of Nature and society that restrict her free action; in the end woman's passionate love of youth is defeated before impediments of Nature.

The plot of Bhatta's 'Vishvamitra' (1938) is symbolic; Vishwa-mitra represents the 'Man', Menaka the 'Woman' and Uravashi represents their mutual conflict. Vishvamitra (the Man) embodies pride and power; Menaka (the Woman) personifies affection, love, tenderness and emotion; and the eternal struggle that goes on between man and woman forms the theme of this lyrical drama.

Vishvamitra, who is an embodiment of pride, wants to have a perpetual domination over the universe, and with this aim in view he begins his Samadhi. Incidentally Menaka and Urvashi arrive at that place; while Menaka has nothing but womanly affection and sweetness in her, Urvashi has a tinge of the bitter also. When the latter understands the purpose of Vishvamitra's Samadhi, she protests against man's ambition to rule over everything else in the world; in a fit of jealousy she says —

जब नारी नर दोनों ही से सृष्टि है,
एक बड़ा छोटा हो क्योंकर दूसरा।

Menaka tries to pacify her with this reply —

यद्यपि हममें नहीं भुजा का बुद्धि का
बल, तो भी तो एक हृदय बल पास है।
यदि चाहूं तो अभी तपस्वी को उठा,
नाच नचाऊं जड़ पुतली कर काम की।

Urvashi, who is convinced of the inferiority of womankind, doubts the boast of Menaka; but the latter is aware both of the power and weakness of man, and the weakness and strength of her own sex. While Urvashi deplores the weak, slave position of woman, Menaka extolls the greatness and strength of the same sex —

उर्वशी — नारी प्राण-विहीन चेतना से रहित,
एक भावना पुंज पराई आस है।
जो साधन है जग में मानव-सौख्य की,
सुख-हीना है स्वयं, अपर का सुखसदा।
वह विलास स्वच्छन्द पुरुष के प्राण की,
मदिरा जिसको स्वयं नशा होता नहीं।

मेनका — वह सत्ता है, कोमल जग के तत्त्व की,
और कल्पना सहज विधाता हृदय की,
मानव के नैराश्य-पुञ्ज में रूप की,
ज्योति-शिखा है नारी-नर की चाहना।
यदि इस जग में न रहे बुद्धि-विवेक तो,
नारी कोमल हृदय-तन्तु की स्फुरणा।

In order to prove to Urvashi the real strength of her sex, Menaka undertakes to defeat the haughty sage. At her mere wish Spring and Cupid make their appearance; Vishvamitra's Samadhi is broken; his eyes successively give expression of surprise, anger, emotion and then of the exhilaration of passion. When he catches sight of Menaka, he soon loses his selfcontrol; now he begins to look upon his resolve of undertaking the life of hard penance and of denying his body the pleasures of senses as mere foolishness. He makes passionate appeals to Menaka, but when she disregards his entreaties, he decides to commit suicide. But Menaka stops him, and her object of achieving victory over man's pride being fulfilled, she surrenders herself to the sage.

In this play although the author has devoted special attention to the depiction of human sentiments and emotions, and the lyrical element is therefore abundant, yet the psycho-analysis of the characters is very weak. The playwright has not depicted the

conflict between different emotions of the mind of any character, even when there was occasion for that; for instance, when Menaka makes her sudden appearance before the austere sage, the poet could have nicely described the inner conflict in Vishvamitra's mind. His regard of his own pride and hard life would have come into sharp conflict with the irrestible attraction that Menaka's appearance produced in his mind. But the playwright has not at all described any struggle in Vishvamitra's mind at that moment; his Vishvamitra is at once overpowered by Menaka's beauty and charm, and forgets his pride and prestige.

In his lyrical dramas, Bhatta appears before us essentially as a lyrical poet; he has introduced a profuse flow of sentiment and a series of romantic pictures in these plays. His great lyrical experience and ability has brought him great success in these lyrical plays, in which sentiment is needed to be abundant and action is scarce. Here the poet could give a free hand to his imagination and emotions, which enhance the beauty of a lyrical play.

Seth Govind Das has also written an excellent lyrical drama, namely 'Sneh Ya Swarg' (स्नेह या स्वर्ग ; 1946).[1] The theme of this play has been borrowed from Homer's 'Iliad', but it has been presented in beautiful Indian colours. The plot of this play moves round the eternal problem of Love and woman's actions and reactions to it. Two young men are tenderly attached to a young girl, and the play is a nice representation of inner struggle of girl's mind, her actions and reactions to the affections and entreaties of her two lovers.

The interest of the story and the beauty of the plot is enhanced by making one lover an ordinary man of the mortal world and the other a god. Ajey, the hero of the play, is a mortal youth who is deeply in love with Sneh Lata, a lovely maiden of the world. Both of them have been close friends since childhood and now in youth that childish attachment has developed into deep love. Sneh Lata is so lovely that Jayant, son of god Indra is charmed by her surpassing beauty and asks her father for her hand in marriage. Now the heroine is to choose between Ajey and Jayant — one is an ordinary

1. See Introduction to the play.

mortal youth while the latter is a god, marriage with whom would make the mortal heroine also immortal and bring her the kingdom of heaven. Sneh Lata is put in a great dilemma; her father, overpowered by his greed for wealth and divine glory, is in favour of Jayant. But the girl, when she comes to know that Jayant's love is nothing but mere lust for her beauty, while Ajey's love is sincere and selfless, offers her hand to the mortal lover instead of the divine, thus proving to the world that a young girl values true love (स्नेह) more than heaven (स्वर्ग)

The author has depicted Sneh Lata as a resolute girl of independent thoughts. Jayant sends his sister Shuchita, and Ajey sends his friend Prabhakar to Sneh Lata — each with the purpose of convassing for himself. But Sneh Lata decides to select her life-companion strictly on basis of merit; and she remains unmoved by Shuchita's romantic description of heaven and immortality as also by the friendly appeals of Prabhakar. The playwright has given a very picturesque description of Shuchita's aerial car, its glamour and aerial movement; but the chariot is not actually shown on the stage and has been kept behind the scenes, because it would have been very difficult in stage-performance to represent the aerial car and its movement.

When Prabhakar returns disappointed, Ajey himself decides to go to Sneh Lata not to request her to choose him in the bridal election, but as her well-wisher simply to warn her against the sensuous love of Jayant, which is nothing but lust for her youth and beauty —

> जयन्त है अनन्त और अनन्त उसकी
> प्रेयसी भी हैं। स्नेह स्वर्ग का सदा रहता
> पारावत-प्रेम-सा, सारस-सा, स्नेह नहीं
> उनके उर में न प्रेम किन्तु है लालसा। (Act II scene I)

Now Jayant challenges Ajey for a duel in order to settle the bridal contest. Ajey, although a mortal, at once gets ready for the fight, but Sneh Lata tries to dissuade him with these words —

> स्नेह० — अजेय, अब तक न मैंने तुमको चुना
> समर-समाप्ति पर चुन लूंगी यह भी
> आश्वासन नहीं, अतः मृग-मरीचिका पै
> शरीरों के चूरा में दाव यह शरीरी का। (Act II scene 3)

Ajey and Sneh Lata exchange arguments and counter-arguments; Ajey makes a forceful expression of his love and sacrifice —

अजेय – बिना प्रत्यार्पण के अर्पण की महानता
प्रेम के पथ का पथिक ही जान सकता
. . . .
. . . .
फिर निजको अर्पण किया तुमने नहीं,
पर कर चुका मैं तो अर्पण अपनेको;
मेरी और बोली, बोली जा चुकी क्रय की।
बिना प्रत्यार्पण प्राण-अर्पण में तेज जो
प्रत्यार्पण पश्चात् कदाचित् हो नहीं सकता। (Act II scene 3)

With these and other arguments of Ajey, Sneh Lata is convinced of his true love. Now she follows him to the battlefield with the final decision (in her mind) that in case Ajey comes out victorious, she will marry him; but in case he is killed in battle, she too will follow him to heaven after performing Sati.

In the duel, which is although ill-matched, Ajey gives wonderful evidence of his skill of warfare and spirit of ideal heroism. In the thick of battle, Indra arrives on the scene, asks both the heroes to stop fighting and gives Sneh Lata a few minutes to arrive at a final decision. Sneh Lata retires to loneliness with her friend Chapala, and compares Jayant and Ajey —

. . . . जहां स्वर्ण, रत्नों की
राशी राशी रेणु है, किंतु नेह-नीर का
सागर नहीं, गागर नहीं, बिन्दु भी नहीं।
स्वेच्छाचारी औ' अप्सरा-विहारी जयन्त में
आभा है अभिमान की, स्नेह स्नेह का नहीं।
मुख से, मुद्रा से, स्वर से, शब्दों से, सबसे
सखि, बार बार ध्वनि एक ध्वनित होती
लालसा, लालसा, लालसा, लालसा, लालसा।
औ' इसके विपरीत विनम्रता कितनी,
त्याग कितना, तप कितना, प्रेम कितना,
इस अनूप, इस अभिराम, अजेय में। (Act III scene 4)

In the end she puts the wedding garland round Ajey's neck and says —

बालकाल का स्नेह यौवन में प्रेम बना।
स्नेह था स्वर्ग – बना जीवन संघर्ष मेरा।
अन्त में हुआ है विजयी स्नेह, स्वर्ग हारा।
हृदय कहता मिलेगा स्वर्ग-सुख यहीं। (उपसंहार)

In this way true love triumphs over heavenly wealth and immortality. Seth has depicted a perpetual struggle in Sneh Lata's mind; from the beginning till the end she is thinking on love and grandeur; carefully and closely she compares Ajey and Jayant, and after a hard struggle her mind decides in favour of true love. The playwright has also introduced physical conflict in the play by introducing the scene of battle between the two suitors; but this physical conflict serves to intensify the conflict of heroine's mind. In depicting a constant and strong struggle in heroine's mind, this play excels all other lyrical dramas discussed above. The speeches of most of the characters, especially those of Ajey and Sneh Lata, are very emotional. The playwright has maintained a regular flow and uniformity in language; frequently he has tried to add colour to his language by using alliteration — e.g.

शुभ्रांशु-शोभित शुभ्र शर्वरी पूर्णिमा की (Act I Scene 2)
चम-चम, चमक-चमक चक्षुओं को ये (Act I Scene 3)
घन घुमड़-घुमड़ घोर घोष करते (Act II Scene 4)

'Tara' of Bhagvati Charan Varma is another fine lyrical drama which abounds in mental struggle. From the beginning to the end there is a sharp conflict between two conflicting emotions of heroine's mind — her youthful passion and her regard for ethical morality. Her character is an interesting study of the psycho-analysis of a young woman's mind where one emotion prevails for a while, and is then overpowered by another conflicting emotion, which latter again gives way to the former after a short while. In this play we find Tara, the wife of Brihaspati, sick of the selfcontrol of her husband; her passionate mind longs for sensual enjoyment, and tries to drag her astray to ignoble acts. But presently she strives to suppress the evil desire that is rising in her bosom with the words — भ्रम है, भ्रम है निपट पाप की प्रेरणा,
है कर्तव्य प्रधान और आराधना।

But her mind asks her whether she means the आराधना (propitiation) of her husband or of the law of Nature and the yearning of her

thirsting heart. When Brihaspati comes to know of this conflict in his wife's mind, he delivers her a discourse on the transitory nature of the world and the evil basis of sensual passion. This puts down Tara's passion for a while; but at the sight of Chandrama (Moon), the young disciple of Brihaspati, a storm of passion again surges in her mind, and there is again a strong tussel between her ethical convictions and youthful passions. Tara suppresses her passion with all her might and says — पापवृत्ति तुम विजय पा सकोगी नहीं।

Chandrama addresses 'Tara' as 'mother' and this address puts down Tara's x rising passion for a moment. But Chandrama's heart also at its bottom, is overtaken by Tara's youth and beauty, and passion rises in his heart too.

Brihaspati goes out of his hermitage leaving Chandrama behind to look after it. Now Chandrama ponders over his feelings of love and passion — पतन! प्रेम क्या तुम यथार्थ ही पतन हो,
नहीं विश्व के निर्णय का आधार क्या?
अरी वासना क्या तुम निश्चित पाप हो?
नहीं कुछ नहीं तुम तो केवल प्रकृति हो!

And atonce he remembers what his Guru Brihaspati taught him the same day — प्रकृति स्वयं है पाप-पुण्य कुछ भी नहीं।

Having thus justified his passion for his preceptor's wife, Chandrama extends invitation to her. Once again a struggle begins in Tara's mind between her passion and sense of morality; a few arguments and entreaties are exchanged, and in the end Tara surrenders herself to the passions of Chandrama. On his return Brihaspati comes to know all this, and he pacifies his wrath by cursing Tara and Chandrama.

Inspite of its **scarcity** of stage-directions 'Tara' has a profundity of inner conflict and psycho-analysis of youthful mind in both Tara and Chandrama. The author has nicely portrayed the condition of a young woman, who has moral duty and feelings, but who is at the same **time** over-powered by her youthful passions.

While to an audience or readers of educated taste and emotional nature, these lyrical dramas can have great appeal and interest,

[illegible] deity. When Brihaspati comes to know of this conflict in [illegible]'s mind, he delivers her a discourse on the transitory nature of the world and the evil basis of sensual emotion. This cuts down Tara's passion for a while; but at the sight of Chandrama (moon), the young disciple of Brihaspati, a storm of passion again arises in her mind, and there is again a strong turmoil between her ethical convictions and youthful passions. Tara [illegible] her [illegible] with all her might and main — [illegible]

Chandrama addresses Tara [illegible] and this [illegible] down Tara's [illegible] passion for a moment. But Chandrama's heart at its bottom, is overtaken by Tara's youth and beauty, and [illegible] [illegible] in his hands too.

Brihaspati goes out of his hermitage leaving Chandrama [illegible] to look after it. Now Chandrama ponders over his feelings of love and passion —

[illegible]

and [illegible] he remembers what his Guru Brihaspati taught him the other day — [illegible]

Having thus [illegible] his heart he [illegible] his preceptor's wife. [illegible] [illegible] attention so far. There again a [illegible] is [illegible] in Tara's mind [illegible] her passion and sense of morality; a few [illegible] and [illegible] are [illegible] and is the [illegible] [illegible] herself [illegible] of Chandrama. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

ordinary audience, which likes and understands prose dramas more, cannot very much patronize this lyrical type of drama. Even prose dramas are not receiving much encouragement from the masses, who are greatly attracted towards cinema. However, literary drama has its own value and charm for emotional and cultured readers, and it is hoped that experienced playwrights like Seth Govind Das, Uday Shankar Bhatta and others will continue to contribute to this artistic and emotional branch of Hindi drama.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

ALLEGORICAL DRAMA

After 'Kamana' of Jay Shankar Prasad, which we have discussed in Chapter XVI, the next important allegorical drama is 'Jyotsna' (1934) of the celebrated poet Shri Sumitra Nandan Pant. Pant is essentially a poet, and in this drama also he appears more in the garb of a poet than of a playwright.[1] There is not much of plot in the play. In Act I we come to know from the conversation between Sandhya and Chhaya that Moon intends to hand over his government of the earth to his wife Jyotsna (Moonshine) with the hope that she will create a heaven of joy and happiness there. In Act II both the King and the Queen appear in their royal glory and Queen Jyotsna is instructed accordingly by King Indu. In Act III Jyotsna descends on the mortal world in the company of Pavan and Surabhi. She enquires from Pavan the real condition of the mortal world, and he describes the same at great length in a very effective manner as follows —

पवन— ......एक ओर धर्मान्धता, अंधविश्वास और जीर्ण रूढ़ियों से संग्राम चल रहा है। दूसरी ओर
वैभव और शक्ति का मोह मनुष्य की छाती को लोहश्रृंखला की तरह जकड़े हुए है। बुद्धि
का अहंकार, प्रखर त्रिशूल की तरह बढ़कर मनुष्य के देवत्व-प्रिय स्वभाव एवं आदर्श-प्रिय
हृदय को स्वार्थ की नोंक से छेद रहा है।......विकासवाद के दुष्परिणाम से, भौतिक ऐश्वर्य
पर मुग्ध एवं इन्द्रिय-सुख से लुब्ध मनुष्य जाति, समस्त वेग से जड़वाद के गर्त की ओर
अग्रसर हो रही है। etc. etc. (Page 47)

Just at that time झींगुर appears in a fearful guise and explains how the principle of 'might is right' prevails in the mortal world:

जो है समर्थ, जो शक्तिमान,
जीने का है अधिकार उसे।

1. See Introduction to the play.

उसकी जाती का बैल विश्व,
प्रज्ञता सभ्य संसार उठे। etc. etc. (Page 50)

At this Jyotsna find it difficult to delay her work; she transforms Pavan and Surabhi into Svapna (स्वप्न) and Kalpana (कल्पना) respectively, and orders them to establish before men, with the help of art and music, higher ideals of humanity, and to turn man from materialism to spiritualism, from the gross to the subtle. Svapna and Kalpana accept her orders, enter into the mind of ~~the~~ sleeping mankind, and inspire humanity with new feelings and nobler emotions like truth, mercy, sacrifice, affection and devotion. Consequently a new era of love and fraternity dawns upon the Earth; and having thus finished her task on Earth, Jyotsna returns to her divine world. In Act IV we find that with the abundance and greater strength of nobler sentiments, the baser emotions of mankind gradually lose their existence in darkness, and the coming of Dawn is announced. In Act V we find the mortal world beaming with light; with the coming of dawn heavenly bliss descends on Earth and everything on Earth begins to resound with songs of joy.

From the point of view of plot-construction and characterisation etc., this allegorical drama has no importance; its plot has no action, nor is there any scope for characterisation. Although the impressions of some characters like Indu, Jyotsna and Pavan etc. are very clear, yet they have no concrete personality. The primary importance of this play lies in its romantic scene setting, its melodious songs and, in the end, in its psychological purpose (as we shall show just now). Pant has achieved remarkable success in his excellent and picturesque scene-setting; his minute observation of Nature and his gifted imagination has enabled him to draw very lively and romantic pictures of abstract things like Indu, Jyotsna, Sandhya, Pavan and Surabhi etc. In the following words the author draws a concrete picture of Jyotsna (Moonshine) —

ज्योत्स्ना अनिंद्य सुन्दरी; आलोक-बिम्ब आनन; उषा-स्मित के कपोल; विशाल नील नभ नयन; प्रलंब, पक्ष्मल पलकें; विद्युत-रेखाओं सी भृकुटि; प्रवाल-ज्वाल अधर; मुक्तातप दशन; लंबी सौंदर्य शिखाओं सी उंगलियां; आलोक-रोओं की आधी-बांह कंचुकी; कदंब-गेंद से उठे उरोज; सलमे-सितारे की हल्की नीहारिका सी साड़ी; etc. etc.
(Page 27-28)

In delineating concrete pictures of other airy objects also

Pant has displayed great skill and keen power of observation. Moreover he has introduced different kinds of songs which have been put in the mouths of different natural objects. If at one place there is a languid song of Chhaya (page 11), at another there is a murmuring music of Pavana (page 17-18), and twinkling tune of the glow-worms (page 52) and so on. All these songs give ample evidence of Pant's delicate emotions, his flight of imagination, variety of word-power and his power of language and expression.

As we have already said, the author has a pschological purpose behind this play. It is in fact with the object of sublimating the life of man and infusing heavenly joy in it, and purging it of its numerous evils that Pant has written this play, and this fact is clear from the speeches of many of his characters; for instance Sandhya sums up Pant's dream in the following words —

सन्ध्या — हां, आदर्श साम्राज्य ! वह मनुष्य के हृदय में नवीन कल्पना, नवीन उच्छ्वास, उसकी पलकों में नवीन सौन्दर्य, नवीन सपनों की सृष्टि करेगी। पशु वृत्तियों से मनुष्य को ऊपर उठाकर उसके स्वभाव को मार्जित बनायेगी। चारों ओर स्नेह, सुख, सौन्दर्य, संगीत का सागर उमड़ पड़ेगा। एक शब्द में, संसार में स्वर्ग उतर आयेगा। (Act I page 15)

Similarly in the following words of Jyotsna, Pant emphasizes the need of Unity and cosmopolitan creed in this world —

ज्योत्स्ना — .... ये अभ्रभेदी पर्वत और दुस्तर समुद्र भी इसकी (पृथ्वी की) एकता को नष्ट नहीं कर सकते। जिस प्रकार यह बाहर से एक है, उसी प्रकार भीतर से भी इसे एक आत्मा, एक मन, एक वाणी और एक ही विराट संस्कृति की आवश्यकता है। यह समस्त विश्व-चक्र एक ही अखंडनीय सत्ता है, एक ही विराट शक्ति के नियमों से संचालित है। मानव जाति अपने ही भेदों के भुलावे में खो गई है। उसे इस अनेकता के भ्रम को आत्मा की एकता के पाश में बांधकर, समस्त विभिन्नता को एक विश्वजनीन स्वरूप देकर नियन्त्रित करना होगा etc. etc. (Act III page 43-44)

The next allegorical drama is Chhalana (छलना ; 1939) of Bhagavati Prasad Vajapeyi. This drama has a marked difference from Prasad's 'Kamana' and Pant's 'Jyotsna'; while there is a floral world in the background of 'Kamana' and a world of moonshine in 'Jyotsna', in 'Chhalana' we meet our contemporary society with its conflicts and problems; its characters are regular members of our mortal society, and they include persons like a degree student (Vilas Chandra), a professor (Bal Raj), film stars (Kamana and Navin Chandra) etc.

Though an allegorical drama, 'Chhalana' dilates upon the eternal problem of woman. Of the three female characters Kalpana represents a woman who is restless and ambitious, and has inclination for Vilas (Enjoyment). No doubt she has great regard for Bal Raj (who represents the serious, restrained and pround nature of man) and his high power of character; but she is disappointed by his restrained and contented life. Vilas represents the other side of man, which is attractive and seducive, and his external glamour attracts Kalpana for a while. But he lacks the magnetic power of manhood, and therefore fails to touch the delicate chords of Kalpana's mind. Thus Kalpana wavers between two powers — Bal Raj and Vilas — the one of internal power of character and the second that of outward show; and this is the tragedy (छलना) of her life. The author means to suggest that if woman disregards or is disappointed with the real but natural man and is drawn towards the artificial though attractive man, she is bound to meet a tragic end.

Kamana represents a modern educated girl, who is restless and who attaches great importance to outward show and fashion (Act II Scene I); her nature agrees much with that of Vilas and they are friends. But Kamana also cannot escape the influence of Bal Raj's personality, and she appears before Bal Raj in the guise of a film star (Nidra) and tries to attract Bal Raj, who keeps himself honourably away from her inspite of a little leaning towards her (Act II Scene 4). The playwright means to suggest that Kamana may mislead a man of strength and character only for a while under the effect of some illusion or sleep (Nidra), but he would not stoop down to be a slave of her.

Champi, the third female character, represents the orthodox role of woman; she has been abandoned by her husband, but she is contented by his mere memory; this selfless and idealistic character of Champi keeps her happier than both Kalpana and Kamana although she is in a much worse state of affairs.

While 'Kamana' and 'Jyotsna' aim at the creation of an ideal world of bliss and joy, 'Chhalana' presents a psycho-analytical stu

of human mind; it is a delieneation of our everyday life, in which the problem of woman has been put before us in a realistic manner. The allegorical element in this play is very scanty and the characters are only symbolic in name; they are concrete persons and possess an individuality and concrete personality like the characters of other dramas. There is sentiment and suggestion in language and sweetness in songs. But there are certain defects also in the play; some of the characters like Champi, Sura and Navin have no relation with the main plot; they have been introduced only to enhance the dramatic effect or to make the qualities of the leading characters (e.g. Bal Raj) more clear and impressive. In the introduction to the play Shri Hazari Prasad Dvivedi of Shanti Niketan, and Dr. Ram Prasad Tripathi of Allahabad University have presented a good critical study of the play.

Of yet a different nature is 'Nav-Rasa' a symbolic play written by Seth Govind Das. In this play Seth has personified the nine principal Rasas (sentiments) of Sanskrit dramaturgy, and has discussed the present day problem of war and aggression on the basis of these person-ifications. The hero of the play is Vir Sinh, who represents the Heroic sentiment; the heroine, Prem Lata, is symbolic of the Erotic; Rudra Sen represents the Terrible (रौद्ररस), Bhim represents the Dreadful (भयानक), Lila stands for the Humorous, Karuna represents the Pathetic, Shanta personifies the Quiet (शान्त), Adbhut Chandra personifies the Marvellous, and Glanidatta (ग्लानिदत्त) represents the Disgustful (बीभत्स) sentiment.

Not only has the playwright given appropriate names to his personifications of different sentiments, he also conforms to the classical description of[1] colours etc. of these sentiments. In this way Lila puts on white garments; Rudra Sen appears red; Bhim has a black make-up; Vir Sinh dresses in golden and Adbhut Chandra in yellow garments. In addition to this the author has tried to infuse their respective sentiments in these personification; in speech as well as action these personified characters give expression of the respective sentiments that they represent. For instance, in the opening scene of the play Shanta discloses her strong belief in peace and non-violence

1. Keith: Sanskrit Drama page 324.

she opposes his brother's idea of war against Madhu; she emphasizes the use of power for constructive work and not for destruction as Rudra Sen believes. She is so much opposed to the idea of war that she dissuades the people and the army from taking part in the battle as we come to know from the words of her brother —

वीरसिंह – यह क्या सुन रहा हूं, बहन, तुमने विद्रोह का झंडा उठाया है। प्रजा और सेना को युद्ध से विमुख करने का प्रयत्न आरम्भ किया है। (Act I Scene 4)

Similarly we find adequate pathos in Karuna's speech as is clear from her words and behaviour in Act I Scene 2, and Act III Scene I; there is deep pathos in the following song of Karuna —

> खुद मैंने ही नष्ट किये, सखि,
> प्रियतम के सुख-चिह्न मनोहर!
> उनको क्या देखूं, दुनिया में
> जब न देख पाती लोचन-धन
> मेरे इन विरही नयनों में
> आज सकल जग केवल जल-कन!
> प्रियतम की तस्वीर मिटायी,
> हा, मैंने लोचन-घट भर-भर। etc. (Act III scene I)

Again there is humour and lightness in the talk and behaviour of Lila (who represents the Humorous sentiment) as is clear from Act I Scene 3, Act III Scene 1; especially her dialogue with Adbhut Chandra in Act III Scene 3 is very humorous. In the same way other characters like Madhu and Rudra Sen possess their representative sentiments. But the character of Vir Sinh (who represents the Heroic sentiment) lacks appropriate force and enthusiasm as is clear from his speeches and action in Act I, Scene 1 and Scene 4 as also in Act II Scene 3. In the same way Prem Lata lacks the warmth and thrill of the erotic sentiment as we can see in Act I Scene 3; Act II Scene 2 and Scene 4.

The playwright has also shown good commonsense in representing mutual friendship or hostility between characters. He has followed the maxim that 'none but the brave deserves the fair' by tying together Vir Sinh and Prem Lata in bonds of marriage. Again Prem Lata has been appropriately made the sister of Lila, while both have been rightly made the sisters of Madhu (वात्सल्य). Shanta (the Quiet) is opposed to Rudra Sen (the Terrible), and she disapproves of his plans

His appears his brother's idea of war against the [illegible] the use of power for constructive work and not for destruction as Rudra [illegible] believer. She is so much opposed to the idea of war that she dissuades the people and the army from taking part in the battle as we come to know from the words of her brother —

[illegible]

(Act I Scene 4)

Similarly we find adequate pathos in Karuna's speech as is clear from her words and behaviour in Act I Scene 2 and Act III Scene [illegible] [illegible] is deep pathos in the following song of Karuna —

[illegible]

Again there is humour and lightness in the talk and behaviour of [illegible] (who represents the humorous sentiment) as is clear from Act I Scene [illegible] Act III Scene 1; especially her dialogue with [illegible] is [illegible] Scene [illegible] is very humorous. In the same way other characters like [illegible] and Rudra [illegible] represent their respective sentiments. [illegible] [illegible] of war [illegible] (who represents the heroic sentiment) [illegible] [illegible] in Act I, Scene [illegible] and Scene 4 as also in Act II Scene [illegible] [illegible] both [illegible] of the [illegible] sentiment [illegible] in Act I Scene [illegible] Act II Scene [illegible] and Scene [illegible]

The playwright has also shown good [illegible] in representing [illegible] between characters. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

of war and aggression (e.g. in Act I Scene 1 and Scene 4.) In the end the marriage of Vir Sinh and Prem Lata through the efforts of Shanta has a deep significance. In this event the author means to stress the need of supremacy of Shanta (peace; restraint) over heroism and love.

In this allegorical drama Seth has discussed the problem of war, and the solution that he has offered is the one propounded by Gandhiji, that is, the establishment of peace through Ahimsa. Shanta is symbolic of Ahimsa, and in many of her actions, speeches and arguments resound the creed and convictions of Mahatma Gandhi.

The sixth scene of Act II has great significance as the author here clearly shows the victory of Ahimsa over Himsa; as a result of the preachings of Shanta, the army revolts against the aggressive policy of Rudra Sen; the soldiers refuse to obey his cruel order of shooting at the Satyagrahis, and they raise the following Gandhian slogans — 'सत्याग्रह की जय', 'अहिंसा की जय' etc.

'Nakshe Ka Rang' (1941) of Kumar Hriday is another allegorical drama, in which the characters represent various emotions and instincts It is a political allegory in which the author again deals with the principle of Ahimsa. Dinamesh (दीनमेष) represent India in bonds of slavery; Karuna in his companion in life and death, which means that the author looks upon Karuna (pathos) as the permanent lot of slave India. Shanti is their daughter, and she represents Ahimsa and non-violence (peace). Kala Kumar (कलाकुमार) is defined as संसार संस्कृति का केन्द्र रूप; he is represented as an orphan, which means that the real and natural art which can bring joy and peace to the world, is disregarded and neglected. Arajketu (अराजकेतु) is an intoxicated barbarian, who is the leader of a fascist nation; in his person the author presents a protagonist of modern, artificial civilization, who outwardly wants to make the backward nations and countries civilized, but who himself is devoid of all humanity and compassion, and who is a heartless brute in gaining his own selfish ends.

Shanti and Kala Kumar are typically Indian in spirit, they are innocent and noble, yet very bold and unflinching in all trials

and miseries. They love to be what they are, & are not desirous of attaining to Western ideals and instincts; even in their enemy's custody, this typically Indian young couple sticks to its ideals. They are symbols of Mahatma Gandhi's policy of Ahimsa and Satyagrah, where the Satyagrahis remain calm and quiet, but bold and unswerving in their ideal; amidst all sufferings.

The allegory of this play is rather confused and is not very clear. There is not much of action, but the author, in lively and powerful dialogues, has nicely depicted the character of शान्ति, कलाकुमार, दीमेष and अराजकेतु. The play draws a sharp contrast between the materialistic and blood-thirsty policy of the West and the sublime and spiritual civilization of the East.

'Usha Ki Vijay'[1] (1946) of the writer of this thesis is another short allegorical drama, in which the author has depicted, in a picturesque manner, the eternal struggle between Usha (Dawn) and Rajani (Night). Surya Sinh personifies the Sun, Shashi Kumar represents the Moon, and other characters represent the clouds, stars etc.

In the absence of Usha (Dawn) the innocent queen Sandhya (the younger sister of Usha) is overpowered by the enemy; consequently the kingdom of the sky goes temporarily to Rajani (Night). But the regime of Night leads to lawlessness and abundance of crime, and the people get tired of the dark rule of Night. Usha and her men are inspired by nobler sentiments; they secretly watch the horrible deeds that take place during Rajani's regime, and now they think of liberating the world from its oppressions. While Rajani is celebrating her treacherous victory, and she with her commanders and soldiers is lost in drinking and revelry, the other party prepares for a fresh attack. The drunken army of Rajani is taken by surprise; in a hard struggle Night's soldiers (stars etc.) atonce take to their heels, while Shashi takes some grips with Surya; but being overpowered by the latter, he too retires from the batterfield.

The closing scene takes us to the luminated and shining court of Usha, which has been nicely described. Everybody is jubilant over the victory. Soldiers are rewarded for their heroism in the recent

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1. Published in 'Chand', March 1946.

battle and Usha offers her own hand to Surya Sinha (in marriage, as both of them have been shown as already in love with each other). The theme of struggle between Rajani and Usha has been made more interesting by introducing the romantic love-scenes of Rajani and Shashi, on the one side, and Megh (cloud) and Chanchala(lightning) on the other.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

MISCELLANEOUS DRAMAS.

In addition to different types of dramas that we have discussed in the foregoing Chapters, there are certain other plays which refuse to accept this broad classification. They do not fall in any one of these categories, and each forms a type by itself, thus giving evidence of their author's genius of creating new types. A few leading plays of peculiar types are discussed here.

'Kartavya' (1935) of Seth Govind is a quite a new type of drama in Hindi literature. It has two parts, the former dealing with the life of Rama and the latter with that of Krishna. The author has named this play as Duty (कर्तव्य) and has tried to show how these two great heroes worked and strove for discharging their respective duties. The aim of the lives of both Rama and Krishna is the welfare and good of the world, but their means and approach to that aim are different. While Rama goes through a series of sufferings, and sacrifices his happiness and life for his मर्यादा, Krishna, is not so scruplous in sticking to worldly conventions and rules of morality. He looks mainly to the consequence and we find him happy and smiling in all circumstances — good or bad.

One important point is that Seth has treated Rama and Krishna as human beings and not divine.[1] Again, he has very skilfully, though very briefly, included almost all the main events of the lives of both the heroes; but as he has treated them as human beings, he has tried to interpret and explain away the superhuman and supernatural deeds of their lives in his own way[2] (e.g. Sita's अग्निपरीक्षा, her धरती-प्रवेश etc.). The author has not shown any battle-scenes on the stage, but has described them only in conversation (e.g. पूर्वार्द्ध, Act III

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1. Introduction to the play. 2. Ibid.

Scene 2; Scene 4;). In the पूर्वार्ध one discrepancy can be noted; in Act III Scene 2 we are informed in the very opening speech of a demon that Indrajit (Megh Nad) has been killed; but in the next scene (Act III Scene 3) we find Lakshman lying down senseless (obviously due to the शक्ति of Megh Nad); it was Megh Nad whose शक्तिप्रहार made Lakshmana senseless, and it was after his recovery from this senselessness that Lakshman killed Megh Nad. It is, therefore, wrong to show Indrajit dead before Lakshman's falling down senseless.

Some of the scenes have become very pathetic (e.g. पूर्वार्ध Act IV Scene 4; Act V Scene 7). The closing scene of the पूर्वार्ध is very dramatic and touching, in this scene the author has carefully described in conversation between Rama and Vashishtha, as to how the path of Duty is thorny and beset with difficulties, and how Rama has to sacrifice all his interests and joys for the sake of Duty. On the other hand we find Krishna smiling in all difficulties and calamities; even at the time of his death we find him happily playing upon his lute —

बलराम – यह लो, उद्धव, यह लो। बन्धु-बाधवों, पुत्र-पौत्रों के नष्ट होने पर भी, स्वयं मरण के समीप होने पर भी, कृष्ण की मुरली ही बज रही है। महाअद्भुत हृदय है। (Act V Scene 6)

And the secret of Krishna's happiness is his non-attachment to all actions as he says ~~the~~ to Uddhav just before leaving this mortal body—

कृष्ण – .....जो सामने कर्तव्य आये, उसे निष्काम हो करते जाओ। ....बड़े सुख, बड़े उल्लास, बड़े आनन्द से मैं जा रहा हूं। जाता हूं, उद्धव, जाता हूं, ऐसे स्थान को जाता हूं, जहां धर्म-अधर्म, न्याय-अन्याय, सत्य-असत्य, प्रेम-द्वेष, पाप-पुण्य ऐसा कोई द्वन्द्व नहीं है; जहां सभी निर्द्वन्द्व हैं, एक हैं। इस मुरली के स्वरों के साथ ही जाता हूं। (Act V Scene 7)

While in spite of all his greatness, Rama is not free from worldly feelings and emotions, Krishna's acts are motivated by a spirit of selflessness as he says above. The play seems to prepare the readers for the hardships that they may have to undergo in carrying out their duty. The author has taken good deal of pains in producing the realistic atmosphere of those times as he has himself described in the Introduction.

'Vikas' (1940) is another beautiful play of Seth Govind Das, which claims a separate category; it is a dream-play in which the author discusses two different views on the 'Vikas' (development) of this world. At night the hero and heroine of the play discussed this very problem before going to sleep.[1] In sleep that very conversation

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(1) Page 91 of the Play.

appeared before the young man's eyes in dream. In dream the youngman assumed the form of 'Sky' (आकाश) and his young mate that of Earth (पृथ्वी) Both advocate contrary views: Prithvi believes that —

'सतत नियति से निश्चित इसका पतन और उत्थान।' (page 2)

She means that the world is revolving like a wheel, and that its rise and decline are controlled by Destiny. On the other hand 'Akash'(Sky) firmly believes that —

शैशव को अतिक्रान्त कर, चढ़ विकास सोपान,
ज्ञान उच्चतम शिखर को प्रकृति नित्य गतिमान; (Page 2)

He contradicts Prithvi's belief and contends that the world is perpetually going towards rise (उत्थान) in a collective sense; in his view constant development (विकास) without any decline (पतन) is the regular course of the world. In support of their respective convictions, both Prithvi and Akash make references to different epochs of the world-history; they allude to different events of the lives of Buddha, Ashok, Christ and Gandhi etc. and both of them try to justify their statements from those very events. The discussion between Earth and Sky ends in smoke and no decision is arrived at; both are firm in their respective beliefs and as they part with each other for their respective spheres, the young man gets up from his sleep(page 90) awakens his wife and tells her that he presently saw a dream which he would like to narrate to her.

This play has no significance from the point of view of plot-construction and characterisation; it is merely a very lengthy dialogue that goes on between the Sky and Earth (and therefore the playwright has named it a नाटकीय संवाद[1] and not a play or a photo-play). But in course of this very dialogue, very interesting, impressive and dramatic scenes have been introduced, and thus a lot of action has been conducted in course of dialogue. The significance of the play lies in its romantic, variegated and colourful scene-setting, in which the playwright gives evidence of his power of a dramatist as well as a historian. Another exceptional feature of this play is that in a single small drama events of different countries and times of India, China and Rome etc. and related to the lives of Buddha, Ashok, Christ etc.— have been introduced; in this respect this play can have

1. Seen Introduction to the play.

attraction for different types of readers and spectators. The ingenious imagination of the playwright enables him to depict scenes of glory and greatness of different times and countries, and the contradictory pictures of rise and decline add to the beauty of scene-setting by their mutual contrast.

This dream-play betrays a strong influence of the cinema - technique[1] on it, and it can be a very good success on the screen. The author has beautifully depicted the opening scene; as the dream of the young man developes bit by bit, in the same order we find different scenes of sky, horizon, moonlight, mountains, trees, rivers, temples and houses etc. coming before his (and our) eyes. In a nice manner the dramatist depicts the descending sky and ascending earth, their union and their occasional fits of embracing and kissing each other. The scenes of kissing and embracing are in accordance with the cinema technique while they violate the traditions of classical drama.

Sudarshan's 'Bhagya-Chakra' (or धूप-छांह) is another drama of a peculiar nature; it has achieved good success on the screen. It is a very interesting and well-written drama which deals with the sunshine and shade (i.e. happiness and misery) of human life. The author shows that the 'wheel of man's Destiny', (अदृष्ट-चक्र) goes on revolving, and with a single stroke of Destiny a man may change into quite a different type. A single event in the ~~lives~~ life of Hira Lal, who is attached to the world, changes him into a recluse, while it changes Sur Das, who had renounced the world altogether, into a man tenderly attached to the world. The author has displayed great skill in plot-construction and the climax of the play is very dramatic and skilful. Although the character of Sur Das is very interesting and original, yet some of the others characters like Sham Lal, Durga Das etc. are no more than types.

'Chhata Beta' (?) of Upendra Nath Ashk is again a dream-play, in which the author has described the wishful thinking of a human mind in a very interesting manner. The plot of this dream play is as follows: An aged man is badly addicted to drinking; at the same time he is not well to do. His five sons whom he brought up and gave education inspite of his eccentric habits, now shirk the responsibility of looking after their aged father. The old man had a sixth son

1. See introduction to the play

also who was the youngest, and getting tired of his father's behaviour he ran away from home, and no one cared to trace him out.

The old man is given a ten-rupee-note and is asked to bring flour from the bazar; but he purchases wine and a lottery ticket for three lacs of rupees with that money. He returns home in a drunken condition, falls down on a cot, is buried in sleep, and there his wish-ful dream begins. The dream which sums up the wishful thinking of the old man, is very interesting as well as instructive. In this dream the old man finds that his lottery ticket has actually won him three lacs of rupees. Now a world of difference takes place in the attitude of his sons and relations; now his sons think of ways and means of extracting that big sum from their father. Now they put up with the extremely objectionable treatment of the same father whose least slackness in ettiquette they strongly resented before.

Somehow or other the sons succeed in extracting most of the wealth from their father, who wastes away the rest in drinking, and is left penniless again. Now the mean selfish sons again turn their back upon their father. Very dramatic and touching is the last scene where we find their old mother making emotional appeals to her sons to look after their father, but they refuse; while the old woman is despairing over their treatment, suddenly her sixth and forgotten son appears and offers himself to look after his parents.

The play deals with a real theme in a very realistic manner; it is a sharp reproach to those selfish sons who are not hard to find even today in the world around us. In Scene IV the author has also raised a voice against the evil consequences of drinking and has also critcised the hollowness of modern civilization. The play abounds in descriptive stage-directions, long or short, which have been frequently introduced to express the inner feelings of the minds of various characters; e.g. [चाननराम "तुम अभी बच्चे हो, तुम्हारी यह चंचलता क्षम्य है" कैसे भाव से हंसते हैं] (page 27)
or, (मुंह बनाता है, जैसे नाम ही से उसका चित्त मितलाने लगा हो) (page 40)

Again, author's method of description of various characters is very minute and amusing, and speaks of his keen observation; e.g.
(आयु अट्ठाईस वर्ष से अधिक नहीं, लेकिन डाकखाने की बैठक ने उसे बत्तीस, पैंतीस का बना दिया है।

चेहरे की दो चार रेखायें 'डिलिवरी', 'बुकिंग', 'सार्टिंग' की विरसता का पता देती हैं, जिन विभागों में कि वह क्रम से अब तक काम करता आया है। मूंछें बढ़ी हुई हैं, इसलिये नहीं कि उसे बढ़ी हुई मूंछें पसन्द हैं, बल्कि इसलिये कि मूंछें कटवाने का समय उसे नहीं मिला। हंसमुख है, किन्तु अब उसकी हंसी ऐसी ही ठिठुरती हुई प्रकट होती है, जैसे शरत के बादल भरे आकाश में पीली श्वेत सी सूरज की मुस्कान etc. (page 34)

In the same way, in the opening scene of the play the author draws a very true and realistic picture of a lower middle-class house; the word-description is so vivid and exact that it brings the very house before our eyes as it were. In the introduction the author has offered his explanation of the different charges and objections levelled against his plays, their technique and themes etc.

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CHAPTER XXV.

ONE ACT PLAY IN HINDI.

Although one-act-play was not unknown to Hindi literature before the modern period, still the Hindi one-act-play as it exists today is more an outcome of the influence of the West than of Sanskrit literature; the technique of our present day one-act-drama has been borrowed from the West, and Ibsen, Shaw, Galsworthy etc. have considerably influenced our modern one-act-playwrights. No doubt alongside of bigger dramas one-act-plays also have their continued record from the time of Bharatendu till today; but whereas our one-act-plays of the ninteenth century and the first quarter of the present century had no independent technique, and were written mostly under classical[1] influence, our modern one-act-plays betray Western influence in technique as well as subject matter.[2] While one-act-playwrights like Dr. Ram Kumar Varma have infused Indian spirit and atmosphere in this Western technique, others like Bhuvaneshwar follow Western one-act-plays even in spirit (as is clear from his introduction ~~+~~ उपसंहार to ('Caravan').

For a few years in the beginning one-act-play was looked upon as an artificial form of literature having no genuine place in it; it was contended that this form of drama is simply a borrowing from the West and has nothing to do with Hindi literature.[3] But this new form of literature has won great popularity in a few years; and today not only that one-act plays are played much more frequently on the stage than full dramas, and they are more popular in amateur clubs in Colleges and Schools and on the Radio, but a large number of good play-

1. Dr. Som Nath Gupta :Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas;page 257
   Upendra Nath Ashk introduction to देवताओं की छाया में page 12 and 13.
2. Ibid.
3. Dr. Ram Kumar Varma: आठ एकांकी नाटक का आलोचनात्मक परिचय (भूमिका) page क

wright have turned their attention and pen to this type. The rise as well as the popularity of modern one-act-play is due mainly to two[1] factors; firstly, while people in late-medieval and even in ancient times, had ample leisure to sit in a theatre for lengthy performances, our life today is greatly full of struggles, conflicts and very busy hours; now the people want to have shorter forms of entertainment. Even cinema shows are now tending towards brevity; only a few years ago cinema shows used to last for three hours each, but now most of the pictures last for two and a half hours and even a little less. The second cause of the popularity of one one-act-play is the popularity of the radio; radio is getting popular day by day, and one-act-plays suit the radio more than full-length plays (due to the short limit of time).

In the West, one-act-play developed into this form from the 'Curtain-Raisers'[2], which used to be short pieces of entertainment, generally comic in nature, and shown to the audience before the commencement of the actual full-length plays. In Hindi literature, modern writers borrowed the technique of one-act-drama from the West. Before we proceed to discuss our one-act-play of today, let us first trace out its rise, its earliest form, and various stages of development till today.

In Sanskrit literature six of the ten varieties of Rupaka (viz. भाण, व्यायोग, वीथी, प्रहसन etc.) and some ten varieties of Upa-rupaka (e.g. गोष्ठी, भाजिका, नाट्यरासक, प्रेङ्खण, काव्य, विलासिका etc.) have only one act each. The main factors of distinction of these types were generally their Vrittis (styles), Sandhis, the plot and the hero or the heroine etc. They were written under the hard and fast rules and definitions of the rhetoricians[3]; for instance, the definition of Bhana is that its subject-matter is invented by the poet; a parasite sets forth his own or another's adventures, appealing to both the heroic and the erotic sentiments

1. Seth Govind Das: Introduction to 'Sapt-Rashmi' 1941; page 9.
2. Ibid page 7, and Upendra Nath Ashk; introduction to 'देवताओं की छाया में' page 13-14.
3. Keith: Sanskrit Drama; page 345-350.

by discipline of heroism and beauty in the verbal manner.[1] Its Vritti is mostly Bharati, and it has only 'Mukha' and 'Nirvahana Sandhis'. Moreover these various types of Sanskrit one-act-plays had little reflection of real life and its various problems and conflicts in them.

Just as Hindi drama righly begins with Bharatendu,[2] so also the one-act-play rose with the same reputed writer; his 'Nil Devi' and 'Vishasya Visham Aushadham' have only one act each; 'Prahlad Charit' of Shri Niwas Das, 'Shri Dama Natak' and 'Sati Chandravali' of Radha Charan Goswami, 'Madhuri' of Krishna Dev Sharan Sinh, 'Kali Kautuk Rupak' of Pratap Narayan Mishra, 'Tin Aitihasik Rupak' of Kashi Nath Khatri, 'Jai Nar Sinh Ki' of Devaki Nandan Tripathi, 'Dukhini Bala' of Radha Krishna Das and many other plays of the ninteenth century have one one act each; they have been discussed earlier in Chapter V and VI. They are either farces or mostly deal with contemporary social or religions evils while some of them are historical. From the point of view of dramatic art most of these one-act plays are very ordinary and they have no standard technique, while they betray some classical influence.

The preliminary stage of Hindi one-act-play began with Bharatendu and lasted till 1929, the year in which Prasad's 'Ek Ghunt' appeared. In fact 'Ek Ghunt' is the first Hindi one-act-play in which modern technique of one-act- play has been observed. Prasad has a considerable influence of classical drama, as a result of which the atmosphere of this play also is somewhat classical; but the spirit of conflict in this play is of the modern nature;[3] unities of place and time have also been observed. But even this one-act-play could not inspire Hindi writers for writing more one-act-plays.

The third stage in the history of Hindi one-act-play begins with 'Caravan' (1935) of Bhuvaneshwar Prasad. In this period a tendency swept in the minds of some of the Hindi one-act-playwrights to write one-act-plays in Hindi also on the lines and model of Western type, and consequently Shaw, Galsworthy, O' Neill etc.

1. Keith: Sanskrit Drama; page 348. 2. See page 31-2 above.
3. Satyendra: Hindi Ekanki, page 29.

influenced our one-act-playwrights to a great extent.[1] As in problem plays (discussed in Chapter XXI above), so in one-act-play also intellectualism and a strong tendency of realism now began to prevail, and one-act-playwrights began to deal with contemporary realistic problems in their works.

In this period we find two kinds of one-act-playwrights in Hindi; those of the first type borrowed the technique from the West, but introduced their own intellectualism, their own atmosphere and plot in their works. Dr. Ram Kumar Varma is the protagonist of this class. To the second category belong playwrights like Bhuvaneshwar who borrowed not only the technique from the West, but even the problems, atmosphere, and spirit and arguments also mostly from Western authors.

By 1940 modern one-act-play had established itself in Hindi literature. After that further development took place in one-act-play, and new experiments began to be made in this field. The great influence of the West which had been quickly accepted by some of the playwrights in the last few years, now decreased. Now several talented playwrights began to invent and follow their own technique in their one-act-plays. Seth Govind Das, Sudarshan, Chandra Gupta Vidyalankar, Uday Shankar Bhatta, Ram Kumar Varma, and Ashk now began to gradually shake off Western influence and began to infuse originality in technique as well as spirit of their one-act-plays. Today our one-act-play is getting still more realistic and progressive; topics of everyday occurrence and problems of common man's life are forming the theme of one-act-plays today.

Art and Technique of One Act Play.

Fundamentally one-act-play is a drama that has only one act. But the fact of its having only one act does not make a drama a good one-act-play. There are certain other characteristics which are essential for a good one-act drama. The art of one-act-play aims at describing some one important and significant event of life in a short time, in a most beautiful and effective manner. Unlike the longer play which embraces a large variety of plot and action, the

1. Dr. Som Nath Gupta Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas, page 259.

influenced our one-act-playwrights to a great extent. As in [illegible] plays (discussed in Chapter XII above), so in one-act-play also intellectualism and a serious tendency of [illegible] and one-act-playwrights began to deal with contemporary [illegible] problems in their works.

In this period we find two kinds of one-act-playwrights in Hindi: those of the first type borrowed the technique from the West but introduced their own into technique, their own characters and plot in their works. Dr. Ram Kumar Verma is the [illegible] of this class. To the second category belong playwrights like Bhuvaneshwar who borrowed not only the technique from the West, but even the problems, atmosphere, and spirit [illegible] directly from western sources.

By 1940 modern one-act-play had established itself in Hindi literature. After that further development took place in one-act-plays and new experiments began to be made in this field. The great influence of the West which had been [illegible] accepted by some of the playwrights in the last few years has decreased. Now several talented playwrights began to revolt and follow their own [illegible] in their one-act-plays. Seth Govind Das, Udayshankar, [illegible] and [illegible], Ram Kumar Verma, and Ashk now seem to gradually escape from western influence and began to [illegible] originality in technique as well as spirit of their one-act-plays. [illegible] act-plays [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] Hindi one-act-playwrights today.

AIM AND [illegible] OF THE ONE-ACT-PLAY

[illegible]

subject-matter of a one-act-play is one picture, one phase of life: it essentially deals with one experience, a single tense situation, a single significant event, or a strong reflection of a single impassioned moment.[1] The scope of this drama is very limited and there is no room for unnecessary details or side-tracking. With its narrow bounds, a good one-act-play has the power to produce that effect which a longer play does with all its details and diversions.[2] Here the playwright picks up one small, solitary but significant event and then concentrates all his art and skill on that very topic; he exhausts all his imagination and genius on that single event and tries to make it as impressive and dramatic as possible.

Besides the unity of plot and action, the unity of time and place is also useful for a one-act-play, the former being almost essential for it. But while good one-act-plays can be written without observing one or both of these unities, the unity of plot and effect is almost indispensable. The unity or concentration (of action) generally leads to abruptness, which produces a thrill in the climax. The presence of a climax is not altogether essential for a one-act-play, although its presence may enhance its dramatic effect and charm. Still we can have very good one-act-plays even without the climax and some scholars (e.g. Uday Shankar Bhatta) do not believe the climax to be at all essential for this type of drama.

The skill of the one-act-playwright lies mainly in two things: firstly, in his foreright and sagaciousness in selecting a suitable topic for his pen; and secondly, in infusing adequate force, cohesion and interest in his work. The plot should develop in a natural, realistic yet artistic manner, and no support of auxiliary or secondary plots or events should be looked for. There should be a regularity, life and sustained tension in plotdevelopment and the curiosity and impatience of the reader or the audience should grow with every movement that the plot may take further.

Not only that there should be a sustained interest while the plot ascends towards the climax; there should be a similar force and flow in it as it descends and moves towards the ending. If the

1. Dr. Ram Kumar Varma: आठ एकांकी नाटक का आलोचनात्मक परिचय (भूमिका) page ख-ग
2. Ibid.

author does not aim at any climax in his play, then he should be all the more cautious in avoiding looseness and dullness that may be resulted from the absence of climax.

In a one-act-play the dialogue should be forceful, lively, concise and effective; it should possess a sharpness and flow, and should be relevant and to the point. Long, undramatic speeches which spoil the atmosphere and effect should be strictly avoided; the use of soliloquy should be avoided as far as possible, and they should be used only when they cannot be helped and do not appear unnatural.

The number of characters should be very limited, and there too only one or two characters should be predominant. No characters should be introduced unnecessarily or merely for entertainment or other such purpose; every character must have a distinct role to play in a one-act-drama, and he should help in one way or the other for the development of the plot. The author should display his skill also in depicting the internal conflict in the minds of his chief characters wherever possible, but in doing so he should not go too long lest it should disfigure the play; he should just give a sharp inkling into the minds of his characters, and only hint at the conflicting emotions.

Stage-directions which often tend to grow very long are another feature of the modern one-act- play; these are helpful in guiding the setting of different scenes on the stage. Not only do these stage-directions often present a vivid picture of rooms, houses, scenery and persons, some playwrights make use of them in referring to the inner emotions of the minds of their characters; for instance, in his 'Chhata Beta' Upendra Nath Ashk has spoken the minds of his characters at several places through these stage-directions.[1]

So we find that modern one act play is a separate form of literature with an entirely independent technique. It is quite different from one act of a bigger drama, which is not a self-dependent and self-complete unit in itself. Again, one-act-play cannot be called an abridgement, a brief form, of a longer play; it is not true that one-act-play is quite like a bigger play but for its size; as we have shown above, one-act-play has several essential features and also a technique which are greatly different from those of a longer play.

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1. See page 280-81 above.

author does not aim at any climax in his play, then he should be skil[ful in making] the work result in avoiding looseness and dullness that may be resulted from the absence of climax.

In a one-act-play the dialogue should be forceful, lively, concise and attractive; it should possess a sharpness and flow, and should be relevant and to the point. Long, melodramatic speeches which spoil the atmosphere and effect should be strictly avoided; the use of soliloquy should be avoided as far as possible, and they should be used only when they cannot be helped and do not appear unnatural.

The number of characters should be very limited, and there sho[uld be] only one or two characters should be predominant. No characters sho[uld] be introduced unnecessarily or merely for entertainment or other su[ch] purpose; every character must have a distinct role to play in a one-[act] drama, and he should help in one way or the other for the development of the plot. The author should display his skill also in depicting internal conflict in the minds of his chief characters wherever poss[ible]. But in doing so he should not go into long [illegible] it should [illegible] [illegible] he should just give a sharp flashing into the depths of his cha[racters] [illegible] the conflict [illegible].

Stage-directions: the stage direction tend to grow very long are also introduced in the modern one-act-plays; these are helpful in putting the setting of the place, scene [illegible] etc. [illegible] directions as they present a vivid picture of [illegible] [illegible] some playwrights [illegible] any of them [illegible] to the time [illegible] for instance, in his [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

So we find that [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

Some Leading One Act Playwrights.

Although today a large number of playwrights are contributing to one-act- drama, still Dr. Ram Kumar Varma can be rightly called the father of modern Hindi one-act-play. No doubt Prasad's 'Ek Ghunt' and 'Sajjan' appeared before Dr. Varma stepped out in this field, still they were not altogether free from classical influence.[1] Dr. Varma is the first one-act-play wright who based his works on Western technique; he is also perhaps the only playwright who has strictly confined his genius to the sphere of one-act-play, and has never tried his hand at longer plays. Being also an actor himself,[2] he always keeps the stage in view while writing these plays, and almost all his one-act- plays have been performed on the stage.

Although Dr. Varma has written a number of historical one-act- plays also (e.g. चारुमित्रा, पृथ्वीराज की आँखें), still the basis of his plays is mostly the social romance; he often deals with the problems of the highly educated and aristocratic class of society. In one form or the other, the atmosphere of ettiquette, culture and fashion surrounds his works, which often dwell on the themes of love, suspicion, jealousy, hypocrisy, doubt and discontentment etc. Although Dr. Varma deals with various problems of life mostly in a realistic manner, yet an idealism often dominates the ending, as we find for instance, in 'परीक्षा' or '१८ जुलाई की एक शाम' etc; in these plays the author proceeds on natural and realistic lines, but the ending appears to have been intentionally moulded towards idealism (as we have shown below).

Varma has written a large quantity of plays, which do not lag behind in quality also. His earliest attempts which have been collected in 'Prithvi Raj Ki Ankhen' (1936) show signs of infancy of his art; but his art has certainly matured in his later plays (collected in 'Reshmi Tie', 'Charumitra' etc.) Varma firmly believes in the utility of climax in a one-act-play and his plot leads, step by step to the climax; the curiosity of the audience is sustained till the end, and sometimes the suspense is so strong that the audience gets impatient to know the consequence. Even

1. Satyendra: Hindi Ekanki page 29.
2. आठ एकांकी नाटक का आलोचनात्मक परिचय (भूमिका) पृष्ठ घ

after the climax the author does not let the play lose its force, but he maintains the interest till the end (e.g. in 'चारुमित्रा', 'परीक्षा' etc.) Dr. Varma's psycho-analysis of his characters is also very lively and forceful, though brief due to limited space. He draws very clear and bold sketches of his characters in a few words (e.g. the character of चारुमित्रा & अशोक in 'चारुमित्रा') & possesses good control over language.

'Pariksha' (परीक्षा) is one of the best attempts of Dr. Varma; it is a psychological test of the firm ideals of a Hindu wife. As our present day high-class ladies generally live in an atmosphere of artificiality, false ettiquette and fashion and are deeply influenced by Western education and culture, it is feared lest their firmness of ideal character should have been shaken under that influence. In this play the author has examined one such educated wife — Ratna — in a psychological method. and she succeeds in that test. While this success idealises Ratna's character, we fear that this is not the realistic representation of the mind of a Westernised Indian lady; the author has depicted the idealistic and not the realistic picture of modern highly educated Indian woman and we strongly doubt if all highly educated and Westernised young girls of India are so firm in character.

The author has nicely depicted the character of Ratna, which is a study of her conflicting emotions; Dr. Rudra and Prof. Kedar also have some individual characteristics, and the protracted pathos and suspense that prevail in the drama end in light humour and thus remove the burden of the play.

Pt. Uday Shankar Bhatta has written several one-act-plays also besides a number of longer plays which we have discussed earlier. As in his lyrical dramas so also in his one-act-plays Bhatta has achieved good deal of success. He does not always base his one-act plays on climax; but the absence of climax does not make his plays lifeless or dull. Bhatta makes use of the psycho-analytical style in a graceful manner and his depiction of the mental strife of his characters makes his plays interesting and attractive; his dialogues too are generally forceful, lively and natural, and his language goes on explaining the ideas and emotions of his characters in a

simple yet forceful manner.

Bhatta's one-act-plays have been collected in three volumes, known as 'Abhinav Ekanki' (1942), 'Stri Ka Hriday' (1942) and 'Samasya Ka Ant' (1948) having six, seven and nine plays respectively. As a specimen of his art, we can discuss his 'Das Hazar', which is one of the best attempts of Bhatta. In this play the author has depicted the conflict in the mind of the hero (Vishakha Ram) between two emotions; his love of money strikes against his affection for his son, and in the end his greed for wealth overpowers filial affection. In representing this victory of Mammon over affection Bhatta has been very realistic; while Dr. Ram Kumar Varma or any one else, inspite of proceeding on realistic lines might have perhaps shown the victory of affection in the end in an idealistic manner, Bhatta has been very boldly realistic is declaring the victory of greed over affection, because he knows that such Shylocks are not wanting in our society who would sacrifice their son or any other close relative for money.

Seth Govind Das is great not only in his longer plays, but he occupies a high position among one-act-playwrights too. Several collections of his one-act-plays e.g. 'Sapt-Rashmi' (1941), 'Panch-Bhut' (1942), 'Do Natak' (1942) and 'Ekadashi' (1942) etc. have been published. In his one-act- plays (as generally in his bigger plays too) Seth usually deals with some social or socio-political problems, or hints at some special tendency of contemporary society (e.g. 'ईद और होली') Owing to the predominance of problem and doctrines there is usually a lack of curiosity and climax in his plays (e.g. 'मैत्री') In his selection of characters Seth is generally very careful, and he chooses only a very small number of them in his one-act-plays. Like Varma he uses dialogue in a very appropriate manner and has great mastery over language which is usually simple and natural. A close study of his one-act- plays discloses the fact that the author does not write them so much in order to display his art of one-act-playwriting; rather it seems that he wants to make the one-act-play an instrument for expressing and analysing some of the doctrines or convictions of his own mind (e.g. 'ईद और होली', 'मैत्री',)

We can take Seth's 'Manav Man' (मानव-मन) for critical examination; in this play the author has brought two different

~~different~~ instincts of human mind into conflict. Basic instincts of human mind clash against strong impulse of idealism in the character of Padma. She is inspired by strong idealistic emotions in the beginning but steadily the conflict goes on between ideal and reality, and in the end the natural basic instinct of human mind overpowers the impulse of idealism. In other words realism conquers idealism, because in author's opinion, the basic instinct is the real and natural (and therefore more powerful) instinct of human mind, while ideal emotions are unnatural and have been forcibly imposed on the mind by external agencies of society etc. (and are therefore weaker).

In addition to regular one-act-plays Seth has written a number of monodramas; his 'Chatushpath' is a collection of four such monodramas.[1] Although Bharatendu's 'Vishasya Visham Aushadham' is also a monodrama, still the credit of introducing modern and advanced types of monodramas goes to Seth; his monodramas are not soliloquies like Bharatendu's 'Vishasya Visham Aushadham'; in these dramas the chief character does not speak to himself, but he addresses something or some one (it may be a pen, horse or some other character who does not respond in words but makes appropriate gestures and movements) or sometimes reads out passages from his note-book. 'Shap Ya Var' is a beautiful monodrama written by Seth; it is divided in two parts and portrays two opposite pictures of Indian home-life, the first being that of a discontented and disturbed rich family and the second of a contented poor couple. There are two characters in each of these parts; in both, woman goes on speaking in an emotional fit, while man goes on listening quietly without making any response. The playwright has achieved good success in presenting the contrast in this play.

Upendra Nath Ashk has also written a number of beautiful one-act-plays. Besides stray one-act-plays published in different journals, his one-act-plays have been collected in 'देवताओं की छाया में' (1940). It contains seven one-act-plays, of which 'Adhikar Ka Rakshak' and 'Lakshmi Ka Swagat' are outstanding. He has written his plays especially for the stage, and his representation of characters is very realistic and true to life. We have already expressed our thoughts on

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1. See page 45 above.

Ashk while dealing with his 'Chhata Beta' (See Chapter XXIV) which is also a long one-act-play. Ashk deals with social problems in a very forceful and impressive manner; his bitter experiments of personal life have imparted poignancy and sharpness to his style and expression (e.g. 'लक्ष्मी का स्वागत').

Ashka makes occasional use of humour and frequent use of satire in his plays. But in his satire there is no hatred and contempt, ~~and~~ nor pride or conceit in his humour.[1] Only in some cases of personal experience a bitterness and sharp irony has penetrated his satire (e.g. in Lakshmi Ka Swagat). In 'Adhikar Ka Rakshak', Ashk has disclosed the hypocrisy of those public men, who proclaim to reform various aspects of society, but whose behaviour is just the opposite in their private life. In this play the author nicely depicts the contrast between the private and public lives of Mr. Seth. Mr. Seth is very affectionate towards children in his public life, but at home treats his son in a very inhuman way. In the assembly he assures to fight for the rights of the employees, but maltreats his own servants at home. Similarly in other aspects too Seth's private life, which is the real side of his character, bears sharp contrast to his public life which is full of hypocrisy and has been posed for the purpose of securing votes in election.

Bhuvaneshwar Prasad is one of those leading one-act-playwrights who have drawn much from the West; his technique, his ideas and emotions all bear strong reflections of Western playwrights,[2] of G.B. Shaw in particular. Almost all his one-act-plays have been written under the influence of Western playwrights, and the author has himself admitted this fact on more than one occasions; for instance in the introduction to his 'Caravan' (1935) he admits — (लिखने के बाद मुझे प्रतीत हुआ कि मेरे 'शैतान' के एक सीन में शा की छाया तनिक मुखर हो गई है, मैं इसे निर्विवाद स्वीकार करता हूं।)

While Bhuvaneshwar's 'Shyama' is practically a translation of Bernard Shaw's 'Candida', his 'Shaitan' is no less influenced by Shaw's 'Devil's Disciples'; even the atmosphere of his 'प्रतिभा का विवाह' & 'रोमांस : रोमांच' is quite Western. If we substitute English names for his Indian

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1. Dr. Nagendra: Adhunik Hindi Natak, page 156.
2. It is clear from his introduction as well as उपसंहार to 'Caravan' and from his one act plays included in that collection.

-[illegible]-

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[illegible] is one of [illegible] [illegible] playwrights [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] technique, [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] reflections of Western playwrights, of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] influence of [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] in his [illegible] ([illegible]) [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

characters, his plays can be, to a great extent, true and realistic expression of English life. The problems of his plays are mostly those of love and the institution of marriage. But we have to bear one thing in mind; unlike the sex-problems of most of the problem plays discussed in Chapter XXI, the problems of love and marriage of Bhuvaneshwar's plays are more social problems than sex problems, because in these plays the author does not dwell so much on the inner or psychological working of sexual instincts, as on the external or social side of this problem.[1]

Although the author looks upon sentimentalism as strictly prohibited for a one-act-playwright, still he himself has been sentimental and poetic at so many places (e.g. in Manoj in 'Shyama'). He has been quite successful in technique, and abruptness is the main feature of his art; for instance in 'Romance: Romanch' the characters are shrouded in mystery till the end and there is abruptness even in the climax.

Ganesh Prasad Dvivedi has also written a number of one-act-plays and six of them have been collected in 'Sohag-Bindi' (1935). Dvivedi is an aesthete, and he aims at the creation of something beautiful and artistic in his plays.[2] He does not write plays essentially for the purpose of their being successfully represented on the stage;[3] rather he writes dramas just for a clear and forceful psycho-analysis of human mind. The common theme of his plays (e.g. सोहाग बिन्दी, वह फिर आई थी) is the mutual attraction of the two sexes; but unlike Bhuvaneshwar's plays, the conflict of Dvivedi's plays is not between character and society, but between the contending emotions of one and the same mind. In short, Dvivedi's problem of sex is strictly a psychological problem and not the social problem which we generally find in the plays of Bhuvaneshwar.

The author treats love as a permanent, deep and subtle instinct of human mind, but he has introduced realism in his treatment of love. In his 'Sohag Bindi', 'Dusara Upay Hi Kya Tha' and 'Sarvasva Samarpan' the author has tried to analyse woman's mind, and in 'Vah Phir Ayi Thi', 'Parde Ka Apar Parshv' and 'Sharma Ji' etc. he has analysed man's mind, while in his 'Comrade' he has compared both. In characterisation, which is the significant feature of Dvivedi's plays, the author depends mostly

1. Introduction to 'Caravan'. 2. See Introduction to 'Sohag Bindi'.
3. Ibid.

characters, his plays can be, to a great extent, thus and [illegible]
question of English life. The problems of his plays are mostly [illegible]
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Chapter XII, the problems of love and [illegible] plays
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[illegible]

[illegible]

on psycho-analysis and conversation than on events. In his plot, therefore, there is often a great paucity of events, while it possesses good force of psycho-analysis and dialogue.

Having dealt with these authors who are well-known for their one-act-plays, we shall now refer to some other playwrights who have not made much contribution to this side of drama. Bechan Sharma Ugra, who is one of the earliest one-act-playwrights has written a few one-act-plays like 'Afzal Vadh', 'Ujabak', 'Char Bechare', 'Bhai Mian' etc. Ugra tackles serious and subtle problems in a very light, humorous way; his language is very swift and idiomatic and there is boldness and force in his dialogue. Ugra is also one of the earliest one-act-playwrights who revolted against the orthodox orders of society.

Bhagwati Charan Varma is a successful and celebrated novelist, story writer and poet. Of his few one-act-plays, 'Main Aur Kewal Main' (मैं और केवल मैं) and 'Sab Se Bara Admi' (सबसे बड़ा आदमी) are outstanding; in both these plays Varma has referred to the bitter realism of life. In 'मैं और केवल मैं' the author draws the picture of this selfish world, where everybody wants to prosper at the cost of others without caring to share or attend to the miseries of others. There is life and force in Varma's language, and his style is impressive though simple.

Sadguru Sharan Avasthi has also written a large number of one-act-plays, which have appeared in several collections like 'Mudrika', 'Do Ekanki' (1940) etc. besides various journals. Avasthi has a definite viewpoint on one-act- play, which he has expressed in his introduction to 'Do Ekanki'; he does not maintain that plays are meant essentially for the stage, or solely for entertainment; there should be an air of intellectualism and a beauty of literary art in them. Accordingly Avasthi has written his one-act-plays with this very point of view; his plays do not follow the dramatic technique very closely, and the conflict, regularity and compactress are comparatively lacking in his works. He does not try to make his dialogues interesting, lively and impressive; rather he makes use of them for propounding different doctrines and for thoroughly discussing one topic or the other. Nor does he care to make his sentences significant, concise and to the point, which is so essential in a one-act-play.

Besides a large number of longer plays which we have discussed in earlier chapters, Hari Krishna Premi has also written a few one-act-plays; His 'Mandir' (1942) contains seven such one-act-plays, namely 'Sewa-Mandir', 'Matri Mandir', 'Rashtra-Mandir', Man Mandir' (मान-मन्दिर), 'Nyay-Mandir,'Vani-Mandir' and 'Grih-Mandir'. The theme of these plays is obvious from their very title; but even while dealing with social, socio-political or ~~dramatic~~ domestic problems the author has not been able to resist his charm of history, and his 'Man-Mandir', 'Nyay-Mandir' etc. are historical one-act-plays. The atmosphere and art of Premi's one-act-plays (especially those which deal with history) is mostly the same that we find in his bigger historical dramas. Likewise the author has introduced frequent songs in oneact-plays also. As in bigger historical plays so here also the Charini or any other singer appears with her or his songs to give inspiration or strength to a despairing or disappointed character (E.g. in सेवा-मन्दिर, न्याय-मन्दिर, मान-मन्दिर etc.).

'Sewa-Mandir' is a good attempt of Premi in which he nicely describes the conflict in the mind of Radha, a village girl; she is a widow, but her youthful desires are still very strong and she proposes Madhav to marry her. While Radha describes her strictly realistic nature to Madhav in the following words, राधा — नहीं, मैं एक दुर्बल नारी हूं। मुझे भूख लगती है। मुझे प्यास लगती है। मुझे भोजन चाहिए, मुझे पानी चाहिए। तुम मेरे हृदय की भूख मिटाओ, माधव! तुम मेरे प्राणों की प्यास मिटाओ etc. (Scene I). Madhav teaches her to be idealistic in conduct. When Madhav asks her to care for and to be afraid of society, Radha forcefully says —

राधा — मेरा जीवन मेरा अपना है। समाज इसका स्वामी नहीं है। etc. etc. (Scene I)

The author describes the mental conflict of Radha at great length; her individual instincts and interests clash against the injunctions of society; in the end Madhav teaches her the lesson of 'service' (सेवा) of mankind in the following words —

माधव — ..... यह सम्पूर्ण विश्व भगवान का मन्दिर है। प्रत्येक प्राणी भगवान की मूर्ति है। उनकी सेवा करने में ही सच्ची शान्ति मिलती है, राधा! मैं जब से सेवा-मंदिर का साधक बना हूं मेरे औद्धत्य के कपड़े छिन्न-भिन्न हो गये हैं etc. (Scene 3)

And now he accepts Radha not as his wife, but as his companion in the work of selfless service of mankind. Premi has used simple language and his dialogue is possessed of the same life and force which we find in

his bigger historical plays.

Shambhu Dyal Saxena is another writer, who has lately entered the field of one-act-play. His 'Valkal' is a collection of four short dramas namely 'Valkal' 'Prahari', 'Atithya' and 'Sone Ki Murti'; these four plays deal with various events of Rama's life, and all of them are of ordinary merit. In addition to these one-act-playwrights, a few other writers have written solitary one-act-plays which have mostly appeared in different journals. Of these, Kamala Kant's 'Suryoday', Shri Vishnu's 'Man Bap' (मां बाप), Avinash Chandra's 'Rah Ke Kante', Dharam Prakash Anand's 'Dīnū' and 'Sitamgar', and 'Usha Ki Vijay' (discussed in Chapter XXIII) and 'Abhishap' (discussed below) of the writer of this thesis deserve a mention.

In 'Abhishap'[1] the author has discussed whether poverty or excessive wealth is a curse (अभिशाप). The play begins with a romantic description of the bungalow of a millionaire, which is situated near Sri Nagar in lovely surroundings. A few hints have also been thrown on the very luxurious and extravagant life that these rich people generally lead. The effect of this description is enhanced by drawing a lively and powerful contrast between the extremely poor and sterving condition of an old man on one hand and the extremely haughty and extravagant life of Usha and Arun on the other; the irony of fate is that the old man turns out to be their long lost father.

There is vanity and callousness in the speeches of Arun, while the words of the old man are dripping with pathos, misery and suffering; here we find that excess of money is really a curse, since it makes a noble man heartless and brutal in his treatment of others, as the old man says-

वृद्ध - परमात्मा, तूने अमीर बनाये ही क्यों! क्या ग़रीबों का दिल दुखाने के लिये, उनका खून चूसने के लिये, उनपर हन्टर बरसाने के लिये! न ये धन के मालिक होते, न कोई इनके पास आशा करके आता! ये धन से खेलते हैं, ग़रीबों की आंसुओं से भीगी भावनाओं को पांओं तले रौंदते हैं। प्रभो, एक बार इनको भी अकिंचन बना दो, फिर इनको निर्धनों के दिल का हाल भी मालूम हो जाये। (Scene 2)

Again the old man describes the terrible lot of a poor man in pathetic words —

वृद्ध - इतना बड़ा शरीर चूल्हे में कैसे आ सकता है, बाबूजी! ग़रीबों को जलाने के लिये अमीरों का क्रोध और उनकी घुड़कियां ही काफ़ी हैं। आग उनको क्या जलायेगी! उनकी

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1. Published in 'Chand' January 1946.

भयानक विपत्तियों को देखकर चिता की आग का दिल भी दहल जायेगा। उनकी जलती हुई आहों के आगे चिता की धधकती हुई लपटें भी शीतल पड़ जायेंगी। (Scene 2)

The play ends with the climax when the old man falls down from the stairs of Arun's Kothi and dies; Usha comes out to look at the old man but is horrified to read her own father's name imprinted on the forearm of the oldman. A few minutes earlier, she and her brother (Arun) were talking very affectionately of their longlost father, whom they wished to see again even at the cost of all their wealth (Scene I); and that very old father met his tragic end at the hands of his son and daughter who were drunken with the wine of wealth. The play also sounds a strong note against the system of heavy dowry, which is prevalent in uppermiddle classes, at least in the East Punjab. It has been staged a number of times in different Colleges of East Punjab under the direction of the play-wright himself.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

TECHNIQUE OF MODERN HINDI DRAMA.

The technique of the ninteenth century drama had been fashioned under two main influences, viz. the classical and the Western, while some of the plays betrayed influence of medieval drama[1] also. But in modern times we find no trace of the medieval influence; classical influence which was predominant in the ninteenth century gradually diminished with the times, and modern Hindi drama shows little conformity to classical canons as we have seen in the foregoing chapters. Western influence, on the other hand, greatly overpowered modern Hindi drama, and especially the problem plays and the Hindi one-act-play have received considerable influence from the West.[2] At the same time the latest Hindi drama bears also some impression of the screen. The tendency of the latest Hindi playwrights is to keep the screen and not the stage in view, while writing their dramas; they include several such scenes which cannot be successfully shown on the stage, but which are quite convenient for the screen; this fact has been admitted by Chandra Gupta, Vidyalankar in his prefaces to 'Ashok'[3] & 'Rewa'[4], and by Seth Govind Das in his 'Karna'[5] and in his preface to 'Vikas'[6]. Similarly a number of other plays also betray some influence of the screen (e.g. 'Muktipath' of Uday Shankar Bhatta; 'Var Mala' and 'Angur Ki Beti' of Govind Vallabh Pant.)

Again in the ninteenth century the classical Nandi was retained in certain dramas while it was eliminated from others under Western[7] influence. But the playwrights of today have totally banished the

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1. See Chapter IX above. 2. See Chapters XXI & XXV respectively.
3. See page 199 above. 4. See page 201 above. 5. See page 227-8 above.
6. See page 102 above. 7. See Chapter IX above.

Nandi as well as the Prastavana from their works, and we do not find these features in modern Hindi drama. Under the influence of the West, our modern Hindi drama has dispensed with the Prastavana also; consequently, one of the puzzles of our theatre today is the comparative obscurity of the author so far as the general public is concerned, as the plays make no reference to the playwright. But in place of Prastavana modern Hindi playwrights have started the practice of writing long prefaces, introductions or forewords, which are attached to most of our modern Hindi plays; this tendency is again an imitation of the West, where in cases of certain playwrights (e.g. G.B. Shaw) their prefaces are considered more important even than their plays. In Hindi, some of the playwrights seek to offer their defence in these prefaces (e.g. 'Shashi Gupta' of Seth Govind Das, 'Chhata Beta' of Ashk etc.); others indulge in lengthy discussions on the plot (e.g. Prasad's historical plays), while yet others come forward to preach some doctrine or teach some lesson to the audience (e.g. Uday Shankar Bhatta's 'Muktipath').

Again, under the influence of Western drama, most of the modern Hindi playwrights have divided their acts into scenes (e.g. Prasad, Premi Chandra Gupta Vidyalankar, Uday Shankar Bhatta, Prithvi Nath Sharma); but the latest practice with our playwrights is again not to subdivide their acts into scenes. Jay Shankar Prasad himself did not divide the acts of his last play 'Dhruva-Swamini' into scenes; Pt. Lakshmi Narayan Mishra and Seth Govind Das have not sub-divided the acts of most of their problem plays (e.g. Seth's 'Tyag Ya Grahan', 'Mahatva Kise', 'Santosh Kahan' etc. and Mishra's 'Raj Yog' 'Sindur Ki Holi', 'Rakshas Ka Mandir' etc.) into Scenes.

Classical dramas could have five to ten acts, their usual number being seven. In modern times when every act can be and often is subdivided into scenes, and there is no limit to the number of such scenes, the number of acts has been considerably reduced; until recently the usual number of acts in a play was five and a good number of plays (e.g. Premi's 'Shiva Sadhana' Govind Das's 'Karna', 'Santosh Kahan', 'Garibi Aur Amiri' etc. Chandra Gupta Vidyalankar's 'Ashok' and Rewa' etc.) have five acts each; But today the playwrights are tempted to divide their works into three acts only (e.g. Seth Govind Das's 'Sneh Ya Swarg' 'Sewa-Path' etc.

Lakshmi Narayan Mishra's 'Raj Yog', 'Sindur Ki Holi' etc. Uday Shankar Bhatta's 'Muktipath', Hari Krishna Premi's 'Svapn Bhang', 'Pratishodh', 'Ahuti', 'Raksha Bandhan' etc. Prithvi Nath Sharma's 'Sadh' 'Aparadhi', Prasad's 'Dhruva-Swamini' etc.). The playwrights are reducing the number of acts perhaps because they intend to minise the number of intervals in their plays, and in a few cases (e.g. 'सिद्धान्त-स्वातन्त्र्य' of Seth Govind Das and 'Adhi Rat' of Lakshmi Narayan Mishra) we have plays with only two acts each.

The tendency of dividing the play into three acts can have a scientific background also. The dramatic plot consists mainly of three parts, and one act can be devoted to each of them; a skilful playwright lays down the foundation of the plot, builds up the atmosphere and starts the conflict of the story in the first act; the further development of the plot, the crisis and the turning point are placed in the second act, while the climax and the ending remain for the third.

Next we come to dialogue which is one of the most significant part of drama, as it is a very effective instrument of plot-construction and characterisation. Of different types of conversation we take up the soliloquy first. For emotional, philosophical and complex characters, the use of soliloquy is very essential; in case of such characters the elimination of soliloquies may make it very difficult to understand their character, and may spoil the charm of the plot. If Hamlet's soliloquies, for instance, are banished from Shakespeare's 'Hamlet', the proper understanding of prince's character will be difficult; similarly in 'Ajat Shatru', King Bimbasar is another complex character who gives vent to his emotions only through soliloquies; in the same way the long soliloquy of prince Siddharth, at the time of leaving his palace ('Muktipath' Act II Scene 4) is very essential for understanding the proper working of his mind, and the fierce battle of conflicting emotions that goes on in his heart.

The realistic playwrights of the West (and in their imitation those of our country also) are out to banish soliloquy from drama as unreal and unnatural. They contend that in real life no characters speak to themselves all alone, and if they speak at all, they speak not more than a few words. This is all right. But we have also to remember

that there are hardly any characters who do not think and reflect in their mind in solitude. Everybody, so long as he is possessed of his ~~mi~~ mind and his mind has its natural power of thinking, does think to himself on several occasions in various situations. This being so, if any playwright wants to place the feelings or reflections of a particular character before the audience with a view to properly portraying his character, he has no other instrument but the soliloquy. It is true that if and when the feelings of a character mature into the form of fruit, these feelings can be understood from that fruit even without resorting to soliloquy. But in many cases and on many occasions the thoughts of a man do not mature into fruit, or they take an adverse turn. In such cases soliloquy remains an effective and essential weapon in the hands of the playwright for appropriately portraying his characters.

Consequently, we find that although there is much cry against soliloquy in the West and someof our realistic playwrights have joined in that cry to some extent, our dramatists in general have not banished it from their plays, and we come across soliloquies, short or long, in the works of almost all the modern playwrights; so much so that even Seth Govind Das (who did not use soliloquies in his earlier problem plays) has used them in his 'Garibi Aur Amiri' and has justified their use in the preface to that play.

Helpful and essential as the soliloquy in certain cases is, its use must be very careful and restricted; it should always be the last resort of a playwright, and he should make use of it only when he finds that no other device can work so successfully. And it is encouraging to note that modern Hindi playwrights, for the most part, have been quite careful in their use of soliloquy.(There are of course many exceptions to it including Prasad). For instance, Uday Shankar Bhatta could have freely indulged in soliloquies in his 'Mukti Path' in order to properly portray the philosophic and reflective character of Siddharath. But he has very cleverly delineated this reflective character by means of lively, interesting dialogues, by introducing the character of Sukeshi. [I]t is only in one scene (where Siddharath bids farewell to his palace [and] princely pleasures) that the playwright has helplessly put soliloquy [in Si]ddharath's mouth.

More unnatural than soliloquy from practical point of view is the 'aside', which sounds all the more unnatural when it is spoken by the character before a huge audience at the top of his voice. But in spite of looking unnatural, the need of aside cannot be denied altogether for faithful characterisation. Such occasions are not rare in everyday life, when a person, while talking to another person, has to conceal the real feelings of his mind, and has to make such replies as are quite contrary to his feelings. In such cases the use of 'aside' may be essential to a certain extent, but as in big theatres of today it has to be spoken aloud to make it audible to the last man, it seems very unnatural and so it has been mostly dropped by modern Hindi playwrights. But 'aside' can be better replaced by another trick, that is of double-acting; instead of talking the 'aside' aloud, the character should take a slight turn and express his real feelings (which he wants to speak out in the'aside') by means of facial expressions or other gestures of the eyes, hands or lips etc. In this way he will succeed in conveying his real feelings to the audience and at the same time escape the flaw of unnaturalness of the aside. The writer of this thesis has himself witnessed the success of this trick of double-acting from his experience in directing several plays.

In proper dialogue, that is, in conversation between two or more characters, our present day playwrights have greatly improved on their predecessors of the ninteenth or the early twentieth century. They realise the significance and force of dialogue and most of them (Hari Krishna Premi; Prithvi Nath Sharma, Seth Govind Das etc.) make use of conversation to the best advantage. Their dialogues not only help in the development of the plot and characterisation, but are also often lively, forceful and dramatic. Generally, the dialogues of our problem plays are very simple and natural and with the exception of Jay Shankar Prasad, other historical and mythological playwrights also have taken care not to make their dialogue very hard and beyond the grasp of an ordinary audience. The language of Prasad's dialogues is sometimes very hard and difficult to understand in one utterance, e.g. in 'Rajya Shri' Act I Scene 1 :—

देवगुप्त — वाह, कितना सुरभित समीर है। प्राण तृप्त हो गया। मस्तिष्क जैसे हंसने लगा और ग्लानि का तो पता तक नहीं। सुरमा, तुम्हारा स्थान कितना सुरम्य है! (देखकर) अरे! तुम्हारा बाल-व्यजन भी बन गया; कितना सुन्दर है! etc.

Such hard and poetical dialogue can find a nice place in books and can make an interesting reading material, but it is not suitable for the stage. In performance the actors won't wait to give the audience sometime to think out the meaning of their utterances. Not only is such a dialogue difficult for an ordinary audience to understand and enjoy, it is equally hard for an ordinary character to speak it out correctly on the stage.

Moreover, Prasad's dialogue becomes so mystic and philosophical at certain places that it is difficult to understand it not only in a theatre, but even in reading such dialogue can be properly understood only after pondering over it; even highly educated persons have to think over such utterances, as quoted below, in order to make out their proper sense —

कृष्ण — सखे! सृष्टि एक व्यापार है, कार्य है! इसका कुछ न कुछ उद्देश्य अवश्य है; फिर ऐसी निराशा क्यों? द्वन्द्व तो कल्पित है, भ्रम है, उसी का निवारण होना आवश्यक है। देखो, दिन का अप्रत्यक्ष होना ही रात्रि है, आलोक का अदर्शन ही अंधकार है। ये विपक्षी द्वन्द्व अभाव हैं। क्या तुम कह सकते हो कि अभाव की भी कोई सत्ता है! कभी नहीं।

अर्जुन — पर यदि कोई दुःख, रात्रि, जड़ता और पाप आदि को ही सत्ता माने और अन्धकार ही को निश्चय जाने तो?

कृष्ण — तो फिर जीव दुःख के भंवर में भी आनन्द की उत्कट अभिलाषा क्यों करता है? रात्रि के अंधकार में दीपक क्यों जलाता है? क्या वास्तव में वास्तविकता की ओर उसका झुकाव नहीं? सत्य! जिन पदार्थों की शक्ति अप्रकाशित रहती है उन्हें लोग जड़ कहते हैं, किन्तु देखो, जिन्हें हम जड़ कहते हैं, वे जब कभी विशेष मात्रा में मिलते हैं तो उनमें एक शक्ति उत्पन्न हो जाती है, स्पन्दन होता है, जिसे जड़ता नहीं कह सकते। etc.

(Nag-Yajna Act I - Scene 1)

But in several cases our modern Hindi playwrights (e.g. प्रेमी, गोविंददास, विद्यालंकार, पृथ्वीनाथ) have tried to avoid these and other defects of Prasad's dialogue; and the dialogue in most of our modern plays is fairly easy to understand, is brisk, lively and interesting. Even in Prasad's plays, inspite of these defects, simple and forceful dialogue is not lacking.

Another feature of modern Hindi drama, which is getting more and more prominent these days, is the tendency to write lengthy stage-direct-ions before and sometimes even in course of the scenes. In the stage-directions the playwrights present vivid word-pictures of men and women, rooms and gardens, and other paraphernalia with which they deal. While formerly the playwrights (including विद्यालंकार in 'Ashok') were satisfied with adding one line on the description of a character or a place, some of the modern playwrights (especially Seth Govind Das in his historical plays, Vidyalankar in 'Rewa', Prasad in his 'Dhruva-Swamini') devote almost one page to the minute description of persons and places. For instance, the stage-direction to the opening scene of Seth Govind Das's 'Shashigupta' covers as many as 38 lines; it will be interesting to quote a few lines from these — समय — उषःकाल

[पीछे और दोनों ओर गिरि-श्रृंग दिखते हैं। पीछे के पर्वत ऊंचे हैं, जो दोनों ओर से ढालू होते हुए सामने नीचे हो गये हैं। पीछे के श्रृंगों में दूर ऊंचे ऊंचे तीन शिखरों वाला एक श्रृंग दिखाई देता है; यह सब श्रृंगों में ऊंचा है। इसकी चोटियां हिम से आच्छादित हैं। नीचे की श्रेणियां वृक्षों और तृणों से हरी हैं। भिन्न भिन्न तरु भिन्न २ वर्णों तथा आकारों के पत्रों तथा पुष्पों से लदे हुए हैं। इन हरित श्रेणियों में यत्र तत्र जल के प्रपात गिर रहे हैं। उदय होते हुए सूर्य की सुनहली किरणें हिमाच्छादित श्रृंगों तथा जलप्रपातों को सुवर्ण के समान बना रही हैं। श्रृंगों के वृक्षों की चिकनी पत्रावली, कुसुम समूह तथा तृण चलती हुई पवन में लहराते हुए रवि-करों से अद्भुत रंग पा रहे हैं। एक चपटे से शिलाखण्ड पर शशिगुप्त और चाणक्य बैठे हैं। etc. etc.]

Then the playwright goes on to describe in a very lengthy but vivid manner, the persons and dresses of Shahsigupta and Chanakya; the author gives such a minute and picturesque description of these two great men, that we begin to find them as if actually present before our eyes. This tendency of long stage-directions is increasing day by day; and in certain scenes (e.g. Act V Scene 1 of 'Shashi Gupta') the stage directions cover more space than dialogue and are more full of action and significant than dialogue.

In ninteenth century drama, verse was frequently used in course of conversation. The same tendency was noticed in the first quarter of the twentieth century; all the farces of G.P. Shri Vastava and some of the serious plays of this period also (e.g. 'Durgavati' and 'Tulsidas' of

B.N. Bhatta) frequently use verse in their dialogue. But as this use of verse mostly looks unnatural and unrealistic, our modern dramatists have totally discarded its use in their plays. On the other hand they have begun the use of very appropriate and advanced prose which can nicely express all sorts of ideas, emotions and feelings. In plays of Jay Shankar Prasad examples of sentimental and poetical prose are quite abundant, while they are not wanting even in the plays of Uday Shankar Bhatta, Chandragupta Vidyalankar and some other modern playwrights.

In addition to emotional and poetical prose, D.L. Roy introduced the system of sweet songs at suitable places in his plays, for the enhancement of poetic atmosphere. In imitation thereof, modern Hindi playwrights have also developed this tendency. Although beautiful songs on suitable occasions are found in the plays of Bharatendu and some other dramatistis of the ninteenth century, still most of our modern playwrights have developed a special fondness for songs (e.g. प्रसाद, प्रेमी). Often they introduce melodious songs dripping with emotion, thus creating a very enchanting and poetical atmosphere (e.g. in चन्द्रगुप्त, स्कंदगुप्त, राज्यश्री of Prasad & शशिगुप्त of Govind Das). Sometimes these songs are very philosophic and mystic in nature (e.g. in Prasad's 'Ajat Shatru'); on other occasions their songs are pulsating with the sentiment of heroism, as in the following :

सुनो वीर ! बजती रण भेरी, करती दूर तुम्हें आह्वान
चलो विजय-लक्ष्मी वर लावें, प्राप्त करें वैभव-धन-मान ।
स्तब्ध विश्व है निशा अंधेरी
वन-पर्वत-नगरी सुनसान,
यही समय है शत्रु शिविर पर
जा बरसें बन कर तूफ़ान ! etc. ('Ashok', Act II Scene 6)

But while most of our modern plays have beautiful songs, at the same time we find that most of the problem plays of the modern period, especially those of Seth Govind Das and Pt. Lakshmi Narayan Mishra have totally boycotted the use of songs; in this way we donot find any songs in Mishra's 'Raj Yog', 'Sindur Ki Holi' 'Rakshas Ka Mandir' etc. and Seth's 'Santosh Kahan', 'Seva Path', 'Mahatva Kise', 'Tyag Ya Grahan' etc. Seth's 'Garibi Aur Amiri' is an exception to this practice.

The second important side of the diction of modern Hindi plays is the use of different dialects by different characters. The use of various dialects adds to the realistic atmosphere of the play; even in romantic Sanskrit drama various Prakrits are put in the month of females and uneducated or low characters. Some of the Hindi playwrights of the ninteenth century also observed this dialectic distinction, as we have shown in Chapter IX. In the same way some playwrights of the modern period also observe this realism in the speech of their characters; the following quotation from Seth's 'Seva Path' will elucidate our remark —

अगरवाला – तो अब महाशयो! हज़रात! लेडीज़ एंड जैंटलमेन! मैं एक प्रस्ताव आपकी सेवा में उपस्थित करता हूं, एक तजवीज़ आपकी खिदमत में पेश करता हूं, एम मूविंग ए रिज़ोल्यूशन नाउ।....

एक बंगाली – (खड़े होकर) शॅभापॅती मॅहाशॅय! और मॅहाशॅय लोगो! हॅम इशी रिज़ोल्यूशन का मन से शैकिंड करता हूं। (कुछ तालियां बजती हैं) हमारा शुजॅलां शुफॅलां मॅलयॅज शीतलां जोठो बंगभूमि है, ऊशका लोग हॅमारा बंगला भाई जोठो शेक्रेटॅरियॅट में काम करता etc. etc.

एक सिख – (हाथ में मोटा सा डंडा ले खड़े होकर) अरे, इक्क भी हुश्यार ठेकेदार इस पार्टी दे नेड़े नईं जायेगा। पी० डब्ल्यू० डी० में इक्क दो ठेकेदारां दी इमारत गिराई हो, हज़ारां दी गिरा दई।.....

एक मराठा – (खड़े होकर अपनी बड़ी सी लाल पगड़ी सम्हालते हुए) पोलपाट लाटणा लेकर घर में पतल्या २ पोल्या लटवाता और खाता है, चांगला चांगला कापड़ पेनता है, मोठ्या मोठ्या बंगल्या में रेता है और सोशलिस्ट बनता है। etc. etc. (Act II Scene 4)

At the same time we find that Prasad in all his plays (with the exception of प्रायश्चित), Uday Shankar Bhatta in his 'Mukti Path', Govind Das in his 'Shashi Gupta' and 'Harsha', Ugra in his 'Ganga Ka - Beta', Vidyalankar in his 'Ashok' and 'Rewa' etc. have used one and the same language for all their characters. All their characters, educated and otherwise, Indian or alien, high or low use one language viz. Hindi with a mixture of Sanskrit words.

Summing up we can say that the technique of our modern Hindi drama is fashioning more under the influence of the West and the screen than the classical influence which is steadily dying out. Our playwrights have borrowed realism and the exigencies of the stage from the West; they have banished the Nandi, the Prastavana, and the Bharat Vakya from their plays, and have given due deference to story-interest and to variety of the plot. But when we go deep, we can find the

classical influence also working to some extent in our drama even today; thus, in spite of the great influence of the West, our playwrights have preserved the sentiment and the poetic atmosphere of their plays. Rather they have added to it by inserting suitable songs in their works. Realism is no doubt liked by our playwrights and audience today, but romantic plays are also equally popular. Again, classical drama does not admit of tragedy, and we find that although in our drama, a number of tragedies have been written under the Western influence (e.g. 'Ahuti'; 'Svapn-Bhang'; 'Dahar', 'Rewa' etc.), still majority of Hindi plays have a happy ending. Alongside of realism, several plays aim at idealism in characterisation, and victory of virtue and nobility over vice and evil is the dominant note of our drama even today. But the Western influence has been very powerful in one respect; under the influence of the West, our modern playwrights freely violate the classical rule which banned the scenes of battle, death, kissing, embracing etc. on the stage, and these scenes are frequently found in Hindi drama today as we have pointed out in the preceding chapters.

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CHAPTER XXVII

A. HINDI STAGE

AS we have discussed in Chapter I[1] our classical Sanskrit dramas were mostly written for the stage; they were generally performed on the occasions of festivals or royal functions and the seats of such performances used to be the royal courts or famous temples. With the passage of time the stage of Sanskrit drama passed into oblivion; it was during the early medieval period that the classical stage was thrown into disuse due to the rise of Vernaculars, political unrest and the hostile tendency of Muslim invaders[2] and rulers, besides other reasons. But although Sanskrit stage passed into oblivion in the 11th or 12th century after Christ, we do not find any other regular stage that replaced it. However, shortly after the abolition of the regular literary stage, there rose new kinds of popular performances in the later Moghul period. To the category of these medieval performances belong Ram-Lila, Ras-Lila, Swangs and Nautankis etc. ; it is in these performances that we come across the earliest Hindi Stage, which used to be very ordinary and of a domestic nature. We have dealt with these forms in Chapter II.

Need of Stage for Drama.

The regular literary drama of Hindi rose as late as the middle of the ninteenth century, as we have seen in Chapter III. Before we proceed to discuss the stage in that century, we may deal with one pertinent question, that is, 'Is stage at all essential for drama ? Can drama, not flourish without the theatre' ? We find that the very word 'Nataka' implies that the 'Nata' (actor) or 'Nātya' (acting)

1. See page 5-6 above. 2. Keith Sanskrit Drama, page 242 ff.

is essential for it; 'Nataka' obviously means only that composition which is acted on the stage. In this respect all those plays which are meant only for study cannot be called 'Natakas'. But there can be one more argument. Admitted that stage is essential for 'Nataka' or drama; but that stage may as well be the stage of mind, and not necessarily the stage of the theatre. In a theatre a particular drama can be well represented only if there are expert actors and director with adequate equipment. On the other hand if a reader is gifted with a fine aesthetic sense, he can visualise the same play in a much better manner on the stage of his mind; he can relish his mental performance more than the stage performance by an untrained group of actors, which may be poor in art and acting.

And this is right to certain extent. But while it is true that a man with vivid imagination may enjoy a drama even by going through it and visualising it on the stage of his mind, yet the number of such persons is very limited. Even highly educated and cultured people enjoy a drama more when it is performed than by simply studying it; today, almost every grown-up man and most of such women (especially those living in cities) go to pictures. To them, mere reading of the printed copies of the dialogues of those pictures has little charm or interest when compared with seeing the same on the screen. For the vast majority of people a picture or a play is mostly lifeless and destitute of all force and charm in reading, while in performances the charm increases several times. That is why they run after pictures even at the cost of money and great inconvenience. Very few people can have so vivid imagination and power of mental visualisation as to perform or enjoy the play in a better way on the stage of their mind.

So we come to the conclusion that the stage is essential for the proper enjoyment of drama. But, in spite of this, we find that there can be and there are several good plays which may never be or have never been acted: the reading of plays in book form is more popular in Hindi than their stage performances, perhaps due to the lack of a standard stage. But this fact cannot be denied that, whether acted or not, a play is usually meant to be acted. The story told in a play may hold a reader as well as it does an audience in a theatre; but

it is written so that it could be, at any time, under the proper conditions, come to life by being enacted before an audience.

It is true that sometimes excellent plays are spoiled by poor acting of mediocre actors. In such cases, fearing poor acting of prominent plays, everybody with a brilliant imagination is justified in choosing to read these plays and stage than in his mind. When Charles Lamb, in his 'On the Tragedies of Shakespeare' put forward that Shakespeare's plays were incapable of being acted on the stage and were more satisfying when they were read, his statement was really shocking to the lovers of Shakespeare. But we have to remember that Lamb idealized Shakespeare, and that only a perfect performance of Shakespeare's plays could satisfy him, and that standard of acting had fallen very low[1] in his times, and so his imagination could serve him better than could the theatre. In the same way Swinburne, greatly interested in drama and a writer of plays throughout his career, was so disgusted by a performance he saw in his early days that he vowed never to visit a theatre again.[2] Plays are meant for the stage, but some true lovers of drama prefer to stage them in the theatre of their mind.

Hindi Stage in the Ninteenth Century.

In addition to the medieval type of stage of Rasa Lila etc., Hindi stage in the ninteenth century had two distinct forms viz. the Parsi stage and the stage of literary drama. The Parsi stage had been borrowed from the English theatres in India; English people had settled in big cities like Bombay and Calcutta long before the middle of the ninteenth century and for their entertainment they had established their own theatres,[3] where they used to stage leading English dramas and farces, and later also the translations of 'Shakuntala' and other famous Sanskrit plays. In imitation of these companies of the English, the Parsis first of all established their theatrical companies in big cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi and they mainly adopted the English stage for their purpose of performance. We have dealt with

1. Milton Marx: The Enjoyment of Drama, page 43 2. Ibid.
3. See page 86 above.

various theatrical Companies and their performances in Chapter VII. Although most of these theatrical companies had established their position in Bombay, yet they used to tour various provinces of the country. The entire equipment and apparatus of their stage they carried with them from one place to another. Generally their stage used to be rectangular or square in form, covered on all the four sides. The main curtain, which served the purpose of the Drop-Scene, divided the stage and the auditorium; behind the drop-scene there used to be two or more other curtains which were used to represent different scenes e.g. of palace, jungle, hermitage, river etc. The Wings covered the right and left sides of the stage, and the actors mostly made their entrance from and exit to these wings.

The green-room was generally behind the stage, but it could also be in one of the wings. Instrumental music was generally administered from outside the stage. As these theatres were generally touring from one place to another, they did not spend so much on constructing a good stage; instead of spending much on stage-construction, they used to spend more on the materials and equipment of every drama in order to make it as lively and impressive as possible. As these theatrical companies were running on commercial basis, they used to vie with each other in all possible melodramatic scenes and farcical devices, and they spent large sums on dazzling costumes, painted curtains and gorgeous make-up, disregarding all canons of art and refined taste.

It may also be remembered that although the Parsi stage originated in Bombay in 1870, a similar stage had already been set at the court of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah of Audh, where Amanat's 'Inder Sabha' had been staged in 1853. But the common source of this stage as well as the Parsi stage was the European stage in India, which had been established for the entertainment of the European people by their own dramatic clubs.

The literary drama of Hindi which took its rise from Bharatendu in the right sense, borrowed its stage from the Parsi theatre. Bharatendu and other literary Hindi playwrights were not opposed to the stage of the Parsi theatre; they simply disliked their cheap entertainment and low artistic standard. The main difference, therefore, in

their theatre was that unlike the Parsi plays their performances generally used to have an atmosphere of purity, lacking in vulgarity. But as the literary playwrights disregarded the low public taste and aimed at ethical purity and refinement, their works and performances failed to be popular among the common people, and they could attract only a selected cultured audience. ~~Bharatendu took active interest~~ According to Bharatendu[1] 'Janaki-Mangal' was the first literary Hindi drama that was staged in 1862 in a Benares theatre. In 1877 a Bengali theatre called 'Vidyant Natyashala' existed in Lucknow; at this theatre Hindi translations of Bengali plays were often acted on the stage. Bharatendu took active interest[2] in the performances of literary dramas in order to infuse adequate life in literary stage. But we have to remember that the vast majority of the audience was attracted towards the Parsi theatres and their melodramas, and the literary performances were naturally less crowded and less frequent.

Hindi Stage in the Twentieth Century.

The Rasa-Lila, Rama-Lila and 'Sangit' which were very popular in the last century, retained their popularity, to a great extent, in the first quarter of this century also. In the same way the Parsi theatrical companies retained their immense popularity in the first quarter of this century. These companies continued their melodramatic and supernatural devices, their boisterous humour, attractive settings and in-artistic pursuits which they had in the ninteenth century. But two important changes took place during this period as we have pointed out in Chapter VII; firstly, while mostly Urdu was prevalent on the Parsi stage so far, Hindi now began to have its due place; Secondly, while in the ninteenth century the romantic love themes generally borrowed from Persian literature were adopted for performance, in this century greater attention was paid to Hindu mythology and epics. With the appearance and popularity of the talkies, the Parsi theatrical stage gradually passed into oblivion.

In addition to the Parsi theatrical companies a few other

1. Bharatendu Natakavali, edited by Braj Ratna Das, Vol.II page 483
2. See page 47 above.

professional companies also existed in the twentieth century. The 'Vyakul-Bharat-Natak Mandali' of Meerut earned great fame due to its play 'Buddh-Dev' of Vyakul himself. 'Shri Sur Vijay Company' of Kathiawar also contributed a lot to Hindi stage, and Radhe Shyam Katha Vachak's 'Usha-Aniruddha Natak' was one of the most popular dramas staged by this company. These two theatrical companies patronised purely Hindi drama and they also strove to purge the popular taste of its liking for vulgar and inartistic stuff.

Besides these professional theatrical companies, a number of amateur clubs were also working in different parts of the Hindi speaking area. In 1908 Pt. Madhav Shukla organised the 'Hindi-Natya-Samiti'[1] at Allahabad on the remains of an old dramatic club and this dramatic club staged several plays including 'Maharana Pratap' of Radha Krishna Das and 'Mahabharat' (पूर्वार्ध) of Pt. Madhav Shukla. Next we find the 'Bharatendu-Natak- Mandali' of Kashi which was founded by Krishna Chandra and Braj Chandra, two nephews of Bharatendu; this company staged various plays of Bharatendu and 'Maharana Pratap' of Radha Krishna Das. In the same way the 'Kashi-Nagari-Natak-Mandali' which was a sister-club with the 'Bharatendu-Natak-Mandali' also staged several plays with success.

In addition to these amateur dramatic clubs, various educational institutions staged literary Hindi dramas on various occasions. Leading Colleges and Schools of United Provinces, Delhi and even East Panjab used to stage Hindi dramas once or twice a year on the occasions of prize-distributions, foundation-days and convocations. But due to certain reasons the performances of these dramatic clubs of Schools and Colleges could not be very successful till the last ten or fifteen years. Firstly, these clubs did not possess all necessary equipment for the stage; they had few or no suitable curtains which could depict different scenes of their dramas in a natural and impressive manner; these clubs could not or did not spend much on proper arrangements of light, which could properly denote the time etc. of various scenes. Without enormous expenditure on these two things, dramatic performances cannot be very lively and perfect; but it is not

1.Dr. Som Nath Gupta: Hindi Natak Sahitya Ka Itihas, Second edition page 165.

possible for all private dramatic club to spend much on these stage equipments.

Besides this, there was another handicap in the successful working of most of the amateur companies of schools and colleges. Until recently even the feminine roles had to be played by boys of tender age, and in some of the colleges even today only one sex participates in the performance. In our country there is not so much freedom for both the sexes to mix freely with each other or to take part in dramatic performances together, except in very modernised educated families. Consequently the acting on our stage is not very natural and realistic (so far as female roles are concerned), as boys cannot play the part of the fair sex in so nice and natural manner. However, the tendency of keeping two sexes apart is gradually disappearing, and women are coming forward to play their respective role in drama. This is an encouraging feature, and can give greater success to our drama.

Our Stage Today.

The theatre of the West is developing fast with the screen. Scientific devices of various sorts are used for producing stage-illusions; difficult scenes of sea, snow-fall, rain and battle etc. are very successfully shown on the stage with the help of various scientific devices and equipment. Besides various stage-illusions which create an atmosphere of reality and naturalness, the stage of the West is very much advanced, as in Western countries the prevalence of the revolving stage enables their dramatic clubs to set and arrange a number of scenes at one and the same time; with the help of the electric switch one scene, after it is finished, can be set aside and the next scene can be presented to the public without losing a single minute. In this way as theatres in Western countries are very much advanced and developed, they are faring well in their competition with the screen.

But the case is quite different with us; without hesitation we can say that even today Hindi has got no standard stage. Our

Hindi play-wrights have, in fact, no standard stage that they can keep in view while writing their dramas. A regularly working and standard stage is very essential for Hindi drama, as we shall discuss in the latter part of this chapter.

Leaving aside the Parsi stage and its cheap entertainment which have ceased to exist now, we come across three kinds of stage today: Firstly the amateur clubs, secondly the screen, and thirdly the wireless. Amateur clubs, which mostly consist of the students of Colleges and schools, or of laymen with deep interest in drama, are found in almost every city and big town. But with few exceptions the stage of these clubs is poorly equipped. They have not many good curtains nor appropriate costumes, nor even proper arrangements of light in several cases. But it is very encouraging to find that in most of these clubs, both the sexes participate without hesitation, and their performances are usually natural and artistic. One-act-plays are also getting very popular in these clubs, and these amateur clubs have a bright future as we can judge from their popularity today.

The second form of our stage today is the screen. Although it was introduced in India only a few years ago, the success and popularity it has achieved in the meantime is very encouraging. Today there are numerous companies, which produce pictures for the screen, but it is a sad fact that most of them have simply replaced the Parsi theatrical companies in their low standard of art and refinement. Still, a number of good companies like the Raj Kamal Kala Mandir, Bombay Talkies, New Theatres, Minerva Talkies etc. maintain a fairly high standard of art, acting and originality. The screen does not suffer from the limitations and restrictions of the stage; various supernatural and other difficult scenes which cannot be nicely or easily represented on the stage can be beautifully shown on the screen. Here the playwright can give a free flight to his imagination and is not required to restrict his pen keeping in view the limitations and handicaps of the stage. This makes the screen-dramas more interesting and effective than usual stage performances.

While our Hindi playwrights used to write their plays generally

for the stage, now many of them are turning their attention to the screen. As we have pointed out in Chapter XXV, several playwrights including Chandra Gupta Vidyalankar, Seth Govind Das, Govind Vallabh Pant, Uday Shankar Bhatta etc. now include several scenes in their plays which are difficult or even impossible for the stage but which can be successfully shown on the screen. But cinema has not patronized drama so far; occasionally some novel is produced in the form of a picture on the screen (e.g. Prem Chand's 'Rang Bhumi'); but generally, film companies have their own story-writers, dialogue-writers and song-composers etc. In this way several artists contribute little bits which ultimately assume the form of a screen-picture. In other cases, some famous novel is dramatised with necessary alterations and omisssions on the screen.

The last and the latest type of drama is the Radio-play. It is of a very recent origin (at least in our country), but it receives quite a large audience. Short plays, mostly one-act-plays, are often acted on the radio, but these plays can only entertain one's ears and mind and not the eyes. While a motion-picture is the collaboration of the playwright, actor and director, in a radio-play even the director plays a subordinate part; the chief collaborators are the author and the actor, and the play is not acted but appropriately read into the microphone.

Radio-plays are the easiest means of entertainment, because a person can enjoy them in his home in a peaceful atmosphere and easy posture. He is not required to go out to the cinema-hall or the theatre for that purpose. But here too only a vivid imagination can fully appreciate and enjoy a radio-play; while the drama is being suitably read into the microphone, the listener should go on vividly picturing the scene before his mind's eyes. Anyhow, radio-plays are getting very popular these days, and like screen-pictures people are drawing towards them day by day.

B. Future of Hindi Drama.

After all India has shattered the shackles of slavery. After

an age of hard struggle and sacrifice has set in the era of Independence. New thrills of liberty have brought new responsibilities with them. Slavish mentality and inferiority complex are being fastly shaken off, and the people are taking a turn towards independent thinking and action. Great changes have taken place sine the day India achieved her independence, and greater ones are expected in future.

With the shaking off of the British yoke of slavery, the status of Hindi language and literature has greatly risen. During British rule, English language and literature flourished in the country under the prompt patronage and strong support of the government. English was not only the court language of India, but it had even become the fashion of the day. In fact Hindi received no encouragement from any quarter, neither from the foreign government nor from the public in general. It was mainly due to the untiring efforts of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha of Kashi (and similar Sabhas of other leading towns of India), of the Sahitya Sammelan Prayag, and of numerous lovers of Hindi in the educated classes that Hindi could flourish, although in face of mighty obstacles and therefore at a low pace.

But now the conditions have radically changed. The English language cannot remain high in our country when the English rulers have left. It will go as soon as it is possible for us to replace it by another Indian language. And of all the modern Indian vernaculars, Hindi is spoken by a great majority and is understood by a still greater number of people. Keeping this very fact in view the Constituent Assembly has now passed that "the official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script."[1] At the same time, due to various practical difficulties, it has also been passed that "for a period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, the English language shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union for which it was being used immeidately before such commencement.[2]

Future of Hindi Drama.

And as soon as, after that prescribed period of fifteen years,

1. The (New) Constitution of India Clause 343 (1).
2. Ibid. Clause 343(2).

Hindi attains that status, its literature will grow much more popular and it will flourish by leaps and bounds. Today short story is very popular in Hindi literature, and drama is not so popular even as the novel today is. Still, drama is not altogether neglected, and we find a considerable number of people taking interest in it. If there are geniuses in the field of poetry, short story and novel, drama too is not wanting in eminent playwrights as we can see from the foregoing account. Naturally, therefore, as the number of Hindi reading people will grow in future, more and more playwrights will also come forward, who, at present, shirk from devoting their time and talents to drama owing to the paucity of the drama-loving (and in fact Hindi-loving) public. Not only will the number of Hindi playwrights increase considerably, some of the new playwrights may turn out to be real geniuses, and they may make some immortal contribution to Hindi drama.

Influence of the West is expected to be still wider for a few years to come, but what we want is that our playwrights, in addition to their borrowings from the West, should give a clear Indian, rather Hindi impression to their works. They should explore new avenues of dramatic technique, and should make some valuable invention in this side. Their dramas should have a strong reflection of originality, and even the Western influence should be so adapted as to give an entirely Indian shape to it. Our drama needs thoroughly Indian 'Ibsens' and 'Shaws' who would tackle contemporary problems with the earnestness and artistic appeal of these playwrights.

Radio-Plays

Radio-plays are very popular these days and they are going to be still more popular with the educated class; especially those people who are afraid of poor acting, and who can vividly represent the play on the stage of their mind will take more interest in radio-plays, provided those plays are written by competent playwrights. They can relish radio plays perfectly in the calm atmosphere of their study, while in the theatre or cinema-hall there may be much noise and

interruption by late-comers and people with less developed minds. At home they are free to think with the drama, can take notes and comments on paper, and can enjoy the play much better than in a theatre.

Stage and Screen.

Besides the wireless-drama, the drama of the screen is also very popular these days. But as we have remarked earlier,[1] very few film-companies maintain a high standard of art and refinement; otherwise, most of the companies are no more than slightly better substitutes of Parsi theatrical companies. It will be appreciated if our film-directors and producers change their old point of view now; in free India they have a very important duty to discharge, and as the film-audience is the largest of all audiences today, they should be very careful in steadily modifying and culturing the low taste of the masses

But, in spite of the talkies and the radio-plays, the genuine place of drama still remains to be the stage, i.e. the theatre. When we look at the wide appeal and immense popularity of cinema, we sometime fear lest the theatre should be destroyed by the cinema. Not only that no audience may be left for stage-dramas, expert actors and actresses may also be absorbed by the film studios. Moreover, as cinema can achieve many things impossible or difficult for the stage, a cinema show is generally more interesting and appealing than a stage-performance. Again, a huge paraphernalia and equipment are needed for every theatre; but in case of cinema it is only the studio-people that have to bother about all these equipments, while the picture can be simultaneously released at so many places without any botheration of collecting necessary material for film-production.

Still, in spite of all these facilities and advantages, cinema cannot serve the purpose of stage, nor can it altogether replace the latter; cinema is after all a shadow, and there is a lot of difference between shadow and reality. While seeing a picture, we can-not forget that the men and women moving on the screen are not real human beings, but merely their moving pictures. The living actors and actresses that work on the stage have their own charm and glamour.

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1. See page 315 above.

Moreover, in a theatre every little defect in acting etc. can be removed in subsequent performances, while the drawbacks of a film remain there permanently, In cinema there is no scope for every-day improvement in acting and stage-setting. In addition to this the actors of the stage come in direct contact with the audience, and have the opportunity of receiving their encouragement in case their acting is nice and superb. The actors of the film have no audience to encourage them and they are subservient to the will and whim of the Director, or in certain cases of the Producer. The limited audience that is present at the time of shooting has no part to play, because these people are mere passive onlookers.

In Western countries also it was feared that the stage would be entirely superseded by the film; but these fears were unfounded.[1] In England, America and other Western countries many people still prefer the play which is performed by flesh-and-blood actors, and hence all good theatres are doing well there.[2] Rightly speaking, a good play will always attract an audience, provided the people get to hear about it. The gramophone, we find, has not killed the orchestra; the cameraman has not destroyed the painter; the wireless news has not made an end of the daily newspaper; and so there is room for both the film-play and the stage-play. At the same time our Hindi stage has got to be developed on modern scientific lines in order to compete with the screen successfully. Like the West we too shall have to introduce a revolving stage, with the latest scientific devices and tactics.

A Practical Suggestion

Before closing this chapter we intend to emphasize the need of a regular, standard stage for Hindi drama. Our drama has suffered greatly due to the lack of a standard stage, and it cannot grow to its fullest dimensions (especially in quality) unless the latter is established. One of the greatest needs of Hindi drama is a first-rate theatre with latest equipments. It is true that Amateur Clubs and private dramatic societies are doing their part well; they may do

1. J.W. Marriot: The Theatre, page 191-2
2. Ibid.

better in future. But their sources are generally limited and often they have no strong backing. These clubs are no doubt doing a useful service to the cause of Hindi drama, yet a major enterprise in this direction will prove a boon to the development of Hindi drama. In the following we put forward a practical suggestion and a workable scheme.

For the right development of Hindi drama and for the proper education of public taste it is essential that one Model Theatre should exist in every big city. Bigger cities like Delhi, Allahabad and Bombay etc. may have more than one theatre each. It is further essential that these theatres should be owned, managed and strictly supervised by the Government. Private enterprise, we believe, cannot be so efficient and perfect; but private parties should have the freedom to establish their own theatres if they so desire, as private colleges and schools also exist by the side of government colleges and schools. These model theatres should be situated in suitable parts of the city, where everybody, young and old, male and female, could easily go. They should be richly equipped with most up-to-date scientific material, in order to produce appropriate and natural stage-effect, and should have a large number of good curtains, necessary costumes and other materials of make-up beside proper arrangement of light. The Board of Directors should consist of eminent playwrights, directors and actors, who should be paid decent salaries, so that they should not feel the temptation of running over to the talkies. Moreover, they should be so selected that they should look upon the theatre as their hobby and not merely as a source of living. They should be true lovers of art, and should be fired with an ambition of making the theatre a brilliant success.

Both the sexes should give their whole-hearted co-operation in the acting of dramas in these theatres. Only women — educated, art-loving and belonging to noble families — can rightly play the female roles in a beautiful manner. Their presence on the stage will greatly raise the standard and prestige of the theatre and their natural and perfect acting will attract crowds of cinema-goers who take keen interest in the person and acting of film-stars.

It is true that in the beginning the Government shall have to

undertake a large expenditure on these theatres. But as compared with other departments (e.g. Health, Education etc.) this expenditure will be very small, while this department (of the Theatre) will be equally or even more useful than the Department of Health etc. These theatres, if properly managed and strictly supervised, can restore sound health to the mind and taste of the public, which is deteriorating everyday under the unhealthy influence of most of the films. That will be a great achievement of the government if they, with a limited expenditure, succeed in improving the morals, manners and outlook of the people. Besides refining their taste, the government can instil a feeling of patriotism, dignity and confidence in the people. In addition to literary plays the government can plan to show propaganda plays once or twice a week, or can carry on their propaganda just before or after the shows like the news-reels of the films.

In every way we are sure that the effort of the government will be crowned with glorious success. Besides this, these theatres won't prove to be white elephants; they will not be only a source of expenditure; if properly looked after, these theatres can be a source of sufficient income to the government in a short time. As we have already emphasized, if these theatres have latest equipments and stage-craft, if they possess the co-operation of eminent playwrights and educated actors of both sexes of noble families, they will soon attract large crowds of people. Flesh-and-blood performances of a high standard will have their force and charm, and these theatres will grow very popular within a couple of years; after that they will become sources of income to the government. At the same time, with the above suggestion carried out in practice, our Hindi drama will progress in such a way and with such speed that in twenty years it may be able to stand in line with the drama of any other language and country of the world.

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APPENDIX A

Bibliography

A. Original Works.

Prabodha- Chandrodaya ----- by Vrajvasi Das

Anand-Raghunandan-Natak ----- " Vishv Nath Sinh

Shakuntala --------- ----- " Raja Lakshman Sinh

Do --------- ----- " Newaj

Nahush Natak --------- ------ " Giridhar Das

Ratnavali (T)* ---- ----- " Bharatendu Harishchandra

Vidya- Sundar (T) ---- ----- " " "

Pakhand- Vidamban (T) --- ----- " " "

Vaidiki Himsa Himsa Na Bhavati ---- " " "

Dhananjay- Vijay (T) ---- ---- " " "

Karpura - Manjari (T) ---- ---- " " "

Mudra - Rakshasa (T) ---- ---- " " "

Prem- Jogini --- ---- ---- " " "

Satya-Harish Chandra ---- ----- " " "

Shri Chandravali ---- ----- " " "

Nil Devi ----- ---- ----- " " "

Bharat Durdasha -- ---- ---- " " "

Bharat Janani --- ---- ---- " " "

Vishasya Visham Aushadham -- ---- " " "

Andher Nagari ---- ----- ---- " " "

Durlabh Bandhu (T)--- ----- ---- " " "

Sati Pratap ---- ----- ---- " " "

Prahlad- Charit ---- ----- ---- " Shri Niwas Das

Tapta- Samvarana --- ---- ---- " " " "

Randhir Aur Prem-Mohini --- ---- " " " "

Sanyogita- Svayamvar --- ---- " " " "

Maharana Pratap ---- ---- ---- " Radha Krishna Das

Maharani Padmavati --- ---- ---- " " " "

Dukhini Bala ---- ----- ---- " " " "

* T denotes translations.

Dharmalap ----- ----- by Radha Krishna Das

Bharat- Saubhagya --- ----- " Badri Narayan Chaudhri

Prayag-Ramagaman --- ------ " " " "

Varangana - Rahasya -- ------ " " " "

Vriddh - Vilap --- ------ " " " "

Sati Chandravali --- ----- " Radha Charan Goswami

Amar Sinh Rathaur --- ----- " " " "

Shri Dama Natak ---- ----- " " " "

Sarojini ---- ---- ---- " " " "

Tan Man Dhan Gosain Ji Ke Arpan " " " "

Bhang Tarang ---- ---- ---- " " " "

Budhe Monh Muhase ---- ---- " " " "

Jaisa Kam Vaisa Parinam ---- " Bal Krishna Bhatta

Venu Samhar --- ---- ---- " " " "

Brihannala --- ----- ---- " " " "

Damayanti Svayamvar --- ---- " " " "

Rail Ka Vikat Khel ---- ---- " " " "

Kaliraj Ki Sabha ---- --- " " " "

Padmavati (T) ---- ----- " " " "

Sharmishtha (T) ---- ----- " " " "

Bharat Durdasha ---- ----- " Pratap Narayan Mishra

Kali Kautuk Rupak --- ----- " " " "

Shakuntala ---- ----- " " " "

Madhavanal- Kamakandala ----- " Shaligram

Mordhwaj ----- ------ ----- " "

Puru Vikram ----- ----- " "

Abhimanyu Vadh ----- ----- " "

Rukmini- Parinay ----- ----- " Ayodhya Sinh Upadhyay

Pradyumn- Vijay ----- ----- " " " "

Mayank - Manjari ----- ----- " Kishori Lal Goswami

Chaupat- Chapet ---- ----- " " " "

Natya- Sambhav ---- ----- " " " "

Sajjad- Sumbul ---- ----- " Keshav Ram Bhatta

Shamshad- Sausan --- ----- " " " "

Bharat Saubhagya ---	-----	by Ambika Datt Vyas
Gosankat Natak ----	-----	" " " "
Lalita- Natika ----	-----	" " " "
Veni - Samhar (T) ---	-----	" " " "
Krishna Kumari (T) ---	-----	" Ram Krishna Varma
Padmavati (T) ----	-----	" " " "
Vir Nari (T) -----	----	" " " "
Man Bhawan (T) ----	-----	" Gopi Nath Purohit
Prem Lila (T) ----	-----	" " " "
Venice Ka Vyapari (T)	----	" " " "
Madhuri Rupak ----	-----	" Krishna Dev Sharan Sinh.
Vivah- Vidamban ----	-----	" Tota Ram
Madan- Manjari ----	-----	" Aman Sinh
Shankar- Digvijay ---	-----	" Baldev Prasad Mishra
Prabhas- Milan ----	----	" " " "
Mira Bai ----- ----	-----	" " " "
Bal Khel ----- ----	------	" Damodar Shastri
Jay Nar Sinh Ki ----	-----	" Devaki Nandan Tripathi
Kaljugi Janeu ----	-----	" " " "
Bharat- Arat ----	-----	" Khadg Bahadur Mall
Maharas --- -----	-----	" " " "
Har Talika ---- -----	----	" " " "
Kalp-Vriksh ---- -----	----	" " " "
Bharat Lalana ---- -----	-----	" " " "
Rati- Kusumayudh --- ----	----	" " " "
Mrichhakatika (T) -- ---	----	" Gadadhar Bhatta
Venice Ka Vyapari (T) ---	----	" " "
Ratnavali ----- (T) ----	----	" Bal Mukund Gupta
Nyay-Sabha Natak ---- ---	----	" Ratna Chand
Hindi-Urdu Natak ---- ----	---	" " "
Bhram- Jalak --- ----	---	" " "
Anargh- Nal ---- ----	---	" Sudarshanacharya
Ramabhishek Natak --- -----	---	" Ganga Prasad
Sita-Vanvas Natak --- ----	---	" Jwala Prasad Mishra

Shakuntala (T) ---	-----	by	Jwala Prasad Mishra
Veni- Samhar (T) ---	-----	"	" " "
Chandrakala Bhanu Kumar ----		"	Devi Prasad Purna
Banbir Natak ----	-----	"	Gopal Ram Gahmari
Nagananda (T) ----	----	"	Sita Ram
Mahavira- Charita (T)	----	"	" "
Malati- Madhava (T)	----	"	" "
Uttara-rama- charita (T) ---		"	" "
Mrichhakatika (T)	----	"	" "
Malavikagnimitra (T)	----	"	" "
King Henry V (T)	----	"	" "
As You Like It (T)	----	"	" "
The Tempest (T)	----	"	" "
Cymbeline (T) ----	----	"	" "
Measure For Measure (T)	---	"	" "
Othello (T) ---	---	"	" "
Hamlet (T) ---	---	"	" "
Julius Caesar (T) ---	---	"	" "
King Lear (T) ---	----	"	" "
King Richard II (T)	----	"	" "
Much Ado About Nothing (T)	---	"	" "
Malati- Madhava (T) ---	---	"	Satya Narayan Kaviratna
Uttara-rama-charita (T)	----	"	" " "
Praphull (T) ---	----	"	Ram Chandra Varma
Mevar -Patan (T) ----	----	"	" " "
Rana Pratap (T) ----	----	"	" " "
Nur Jahan (T) ----	----	"	" " "
Chandra Gupta (T) -----	----	"	" " "
Sita (T) ----- -----	----	"	" " "
Bhishma (T) ---- -----	---	"	" " "
Raja Rani (T) --- ----	---	"	" " "
Nati Ki Puja (T) ----	---	"	" " "
Chitra (T) ---- ----	----	"	" " "
Achalayatan (T) ---- ----	---	"	" " "
Samrat Ashok ----- ---	---	"	Rup Narayan Pandey

Title	Author
Ahuti (or Jaypal) (T) ----- by	Rup Narayan Pandey
Padmini (T) ----- ----- "	" " "
Krishna Kumari (T) ----- "	" " "
US Par (T) ---- ----- "	" " "
Durga Das (T) --- ----- "	" " "
Tara Bai (T) --- ----- "	" " "
Murkh- Mandali (T) --- ---- "	" " "
Shah Jahan (T) --- ---- "	" " "
Kunda- Mala (T) ---- ---- "	Dr. Har Datta
Nagananda (T) ---- ----- "	Har Dyalu Sinh
Hartal (T) ---- ---- -----"	Munshi Prem Chand
Nyay (T) ---- ---- ----"	" " ".
Chandi Ki Dibiya (T) --- ----"	Lalit Prasad Shukla.
Prayashchit (T) --- --- --- "	Padam Lal Punna Lal Bakshi
Unmukti Ka Bandhan (T) .... "	" " " " "
Karunalay ---- --- ---- "	Jay Shankar Prasad
Sajjan ---- ----- --- "	" " "
Prayaschit ---- --- --- "	" " "
Kalyani Parinay --- ---- --- "	" " "
Rajya- Shri ---- ---- ----"	" " "
Vishakh ---- ----- ---"	" " "
Ajat Shatru ---- ----- ---"	" " "
Janamejay Ka Nagyajna -- ---"	" " "
Kamana ---- ---- ---- ---"	" " "
Chandra Gupta --- ---- ---"	" " "
Skanda Gupta ---- ---- ---"	" " "
Dhruva- Svamini --- ---- ----"	" " "
Ek Ghunt ---- ---- ---- ---"	" " "
Tilottama ---- --- ---"	Maithili Sharan Gupta
Chandra Has --- --- ---"	" " "
Svapna-Vasav- Datta --- ---"	" " "
Anagh --- ---- --- --"	" " "
Tulsi Das --- --- ---"	Badri Nath Bhatta
Kuru-Van-Dahan --- --- ---"	" " "

Ben- Charitra ---- ----- by Badri Nath Bhatta
Durgavati ---- ---- " " " "
Chandra Gupta --- ---- " " " "
Chungi Ki Ummidwari ---- " " " "
Vivah- Vijnapan --- ---- " " " "
Miss American --- ---- " " " "
Labad Dhondhon --- ---- " " " "
Karbala ----- ----- " Munshi Prem Chand
Sangram ---- ----- " " " "
Prem Ki Vedi -... ----- " " " "
Netronmilan ---- ------ " Mishra Brothers
Shiva Ji ---- ---- " " "
Pratap- Pratijna --- ---- " Jagannath Prasad Milind
Mahatma Isa ---- ---- " Bechan Sharma Ugra
Char Bechare ---- ---- " " " "
Ujbak ---- ---- ---- " " " "
Ganga Ka Beta ----- ---- " " " "
Var- Mala ---- ----- ---- " Govind Vallabh Pant
Raj Mukut ---- ----- ---- " " " "
Angur Ki Beti ----- ----" " " "
Antah Pur Ka Chhidra ---- ----" " " "
Anjana ---- ---- --- " Sudarshan
Honorary Magistrate --- ---- " "
Bhagya Chakra ---- ---- " "
Sikandar ---- ---- ---- " "
Bhishma ----- ---- --- " Vishavambhar Nath Sharma
Krishnarjun-Yuddh ---- --- " Makhan Lal Chaturvedi
Ashok ---- ----- ----" Lakshmi Narayan Mishra
Garud- Dhwaj ---- ----- --- " " " "
Sanyasi ----- ----- ----" " " "
Rakshas Ka Mandir ----- ----" " " "
Mukti Ka Rahasya ---- ----" " " "
Sindur Ki Holi ----- ----" " " "
Raj Yog ---- ----- ----" " " "

Adhi Rat ---- --- ----- by Lakshmi Narayan Mishra

Harsha ----- ---- ---- " Seth Govind Das

Shashi Gupta --- ---- ---- " " " "

Kulinata ----- ---- ----- " " " "

Kartavya ----- ----- ----- " " " "

Siddhant- Svatantrya ---- ---- " " " "

Seva - Path ---- ---- ---- " " " "

Santosh Kahan ---- ---- ---- " " " "

Mahatv Kise ----- ---- ----" " " "

Pakistan ------ ----- ---" " " "

Garibi Aur Amiri --- ---- ---" " " "

Tyag Ya Grahan ---- ---- ---" " " "

Sneh Ya Swarg ---- ----- ---" " " "

Vikas ------ ------ ------ " " " "

Nav- Ras --- ----- ------ " " " "

Ekadashi ---- ------ ------ " " " "

Sapt - Rashmi --- ----- ----- " " " "

Panch - Bhut --- ---- ----- " " " "

Chatushpath ---- ----- ----- " " " "

Duvidha ---- ---- ---- " Ptithvi Nath Sharma

Aparadhi ---- ---- ---- " " " "

Sadh --- ---- ----- ----" " " "

Ashok ---- ----- ---- ----" Chandra Gupta Vidyalankar

Reva ----- ----- ----- ----" " " "

Punya- Parv ------ ---- ----" Siyaram Sharan Gupta

Dahar (or Sindh- Patan) ---- ----" Uday Shankar Bhatta

Chandra Gupta Maurya ----- -----" " " "

Mukti Path ----- ---- ---- " " " "

Sagar Vijay ---- ----- ---- " " " "

Kamala ---- ----- ----- -----" " " "

Amba ---- ---- ----- ----" " " "

Matsya-Gandha ---- ------ ----" " " "

Vishvamitra ---- ----- ----" " " "

Radha --- ------ ------ ---" " " "

Abhinav Ekanki --- ----- by Uday Shankar Bhatta

Stri Ka Hriday ---- ------ " " " "

Samasya Ka Ant ---- ------ " " " "

Ahuti ------ ----- ------ " Hari Krishna Premi

Raksha Bandan ---- ----- " " " "

Shiva- Sadhana ---- ---- " " " "

Svapna- Bhang ---- ----- " " " "

Pratishodh ---- ----- " " " "

Vish Pan ----- ----- ----- " " " "

Mitra -------- ------ ------ " " " "

Bandhan ------- ----- ------ " " " "

Chhaya ------- ------ ------ " " " "

Patal- Vijay ---- ----- ----- " " " "

Swarn- Vihan ---- ------ ---- " " " "

Mandir ----- ------ ---- " " " "

Dhire Dhire ----- ------ ---- " Vrindavan Lal Varma

Shri Vatsa ----- ------ -----" Kailash Nath Bhatnagar

Nakshe Ka Rang ----- ------- -----" Kumar Hriday

Jyotsna ------ ------ ----" Sumitra Nandan Pant

Chhalana ------ ------- ----" Bhagavati Prasad Vajpeyi

Samaj ------ ------ ---" Ghanand

Mukti Yajna ----- ------ ---" Satyendra

Jit Men Har ----- ------- ---" Chandra Shekhar Pande

Ulat Pher ----- ------ ---" G.P. Shrivastav

Dumdar Admi ---- ------ ---" " "

Mar Mar Kar Hakim -..--- ---" " "

Ankhon Men Dhul ---- --- ---" " "

Havai Doctor ---- ----- ----" " "

Mardani Aurat ---- ---- ----" " "

Sahitya Ka Saput --- --- ----" " "

Gadbad Jhala ---- ---- --- " " "

Jay Parajay ---- ---- --- " Upendra Nath Ashk

Swarg Ki Jhalak --- --- --- " " " "

Chhata Beta ---- ----- by Upendra Nath Ashk
Devtaon Ki Chhaya Men ----- " " " "
Caravan ---- ----- ---- " Bhuvaneshwar Prasad
Prithvi Raj Ki Ankhen ----- " Ram Kumar Varma
Reshmi Tie ----- ----- " " "
Charumitra ----- ----- " " "
Sohag Bindi ----- ----- " Ganesh Prasad Dvivedi
Mudrika ----- ------ " Sadguru Sharan Avasthi
Do Ekanki ----- ------ " " " "
Valkal ----- ------ " Shambhu Dyal Saksena
Usha Ki Vijay ---- ------ " Ved Paul Khanna
Abhishap ---- ------ " " " "
Indar Sabha ----- ------ " Agha Hasan Amanat
Bharat-Darpan (Qaumi Talwar) --- " Krishna Chandra Zeba
Pap- Parinam ----- ----- " Jamna Das Mehra
Vir Abhimanyu ---- ----- " Radhe Shyam Kathavachak
Bhakt- Prahlad ---- ---- " " " "
Mashriqi Hoor ---- ---- " " " "
Usha-Aniruddh Natak --- ---- " " " "
Mahatma Kabir ----- ----- " Shri Krishna Hasrat
Gangavataran ------ ----- " " " "
Sur Das ---- ---- ---- " Agha Mohd Hashr
Shravan Kumar ---- ----- ----" " " "
Buddh Dev ---- ---- ----" Vishvambhar Nath 'Vyakul'
Mahabharat ----- ---- ----" Narayan Prasad Betab
Patni Pratap (Sati Anasuya) ----" " " "
Krishna Sudama ---- --- --- " " " "
Raja Shivi ----- ---- ----" Baldev Prasad Khare
Raja Dilip ---- ----- ----" Gopal Damodar Tamaskar

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Hindi Natya Sahitya ---- ---- " Braj Ratna Das

Hindi Natya Vimarsh ---- ---- " Gulab Rai

Hindi Natya Chintan ---- ----- " Shikhar Chandra Jain

Hindi Natya Sahitya Ka Vikas ----- " Vishv Nath Prasad Mishra

Hamari Natya Parampara --- ----- " Dinesh Narayan Upadhyay

Natak- Nibandh ---- ----- " Bharatendu

Natya Kala Mimansa ---- ---- " Seth Govind Das

Hindi Ekanki ---- ----- " Satyendra

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Do Do " " Shyam Sundar Das

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Prasad Ji Ki Kala ---- ---- ----- " Gulab Rai

Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihas ---- ----- " Ram Chandra Shukla

Do ---- ----- " Chatur Sen Shastri

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APPENDIX B

Index to Names and Authors.

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Index to Works

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